



The Collected Poems  
of John Drinkwater





The Collected Poems  
of John Drinkwater  
Volume I 1908-1917

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## *Preface*

THE arrangement of these poems is, with slight modifications only, chronological. I have left out only such pieces as I do not want to be reprinted.

The dedications of a few individual poems stand as they first appeared. It would have complicated the arrangement of the present collection to include the dedications of the original volumes, but I remember gratefully the occasions of these

J D

*Summer 1923*



# Contents

## *Poems 1908-1914*

	c
Symbols	1
Scaled	2
Lord of Time	5
A Prayer	7
Vigil	10
Expectancy	12
The Building	14
Forsaken	18
The Soldier	19
The Fires of God	21
Challenge	35
The Loom of the Poets	36
The Dead Critic	38
Lines for the Opening of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre	39
Epilogue for a Masque	43
A Sabbath Day	44
Wed	51
Uncrowned	53
Derelict	58
Reckoning	59
Pierrot	61



	PAGE
Love's Personality . . . . .	63
Love . . . . .	65
Lovers to Lovers . . . . .	66
The Inviolable Hour . . . . .	67
Liege woman . . . . .	69
From London . . . . .	70
Roundels of the Year . . . . .	71
The Miracle . . . . .	77
Dominion . . . . .	79
A Warwickshire Song . . . . .	81
At Grafton . . . . .	83
A Picture . . . . .	85
January Dusk . . . . .	86
Morning Thanksgiving . . . . .	87
June Dance . . . . .	89
Late Summer . . . . .	96
The Broken Gate . . . . .	97
In the Woods . . . . .	99
Travel Talk . . . . .	101
The Crowning of Dreaming John . . . . .	107
The Traveller . . . . .	113
The Vagabond . . . . .	114
The Feckenham Men . . . . .	115
Old Woman in May . . . . .	117
In Lady Street . . . . .	119
An Epilogue . . . . .	123

*Swords and Ploughshares, 1915*

The Carver in Stone	126
A Town Window	139
The New Miracle	140
Memory	142
The Boundaries	143
Last Confessional	144
For Corin To-day	146
Mad Tom Tatterman	148
Mamble	150
Love's Challenge	152
The Poet to His Mistress	153
Love's House	154
Of Greatham	158
The Defenders	160
On the Picture of a Private Soldier who had gained a Victoria Cross	161
Eclipse	162
Nocturne	164
The Ships of Grief	165
The Poets to the Heroes	166

*Olton Pools, 1916*

They also Serve	169
From Generation to Generation	170

	PAGE
Riddles, R F C . . . . .	171
For April 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 1616-1916 . . . . .	172
To Edmund Gosse . . . . .	173
Bithright . . . . .	175
Olton Pools . . . . .	176
September . . . . .	177
Sunrise on Rydal Water . . . . .	179
Wordsworth at Grasmere . . . . .	182
Written at Ludlow Castle . . . . .	183
Holiness . . . . .	184
The City . . . . .	185
Daffodils . . . . .	186
Anthony Crundle . . . . .	187
Old Oliver . . . . .	189
Derbyshire Song . . . . .	190
Millers Dale . . . . .	191
To the Lovers that come after us . . . . .	193
Love in October . . . . .	194
Defiance . . . . .	195
A Christmas Night . . . . .	196
Invocation . . . . .	197
Immortality . . . . .	198
The Craftsmen . . . . .	200
Petition . . . . .	201

*Tides, 1917*

	AG
A Man's Daughter	203
Venus in Arden	206
May Garden	208
Reciprocity	210
The Lechers	211
Dreams	212
The Hours	213
Foundations	215
Day	216
Politics	217
Birmingham—1916	219
With Daffodils	220
For a Guest Room	221
On Reading the MS of Dorothy Words- worth's Journals	223
The Old Warrior	224
The Guest	226



## *Symbols*

I saw history in a poet's song,  
In a river-reach and a gallows-hill,  
In a bridal bed, and a secret wrong,  
In a crown of thorns in a daffodil

I imagined measureless time in a day,  
And starry space in a wagon road,  
And the treasure of all good harvests lay  
In the single seed that the sower sowed

My garden wind had driven and havened again  
All ships that ever had gone to sea,  
And I saw the glory of all dead men  
In the shadow that went by the side of me

## *Sealed*

THE doves call down the long arcades of pine,  
The screaming swifts are tiring towards their eaves,  
And you are very quiet, O lover of mine.

No foot is on your ploughlands now, the song  
Fails and is no more heard among your leaves  
That wearied not in praise the whole day long.

I have watched with you till this twilight-fall,  
The proud companion of your loveliness,  
Have you no word for me, no word at all ?

The passion of my thought I have given you,  
Striving towards your passion, nevertheless,  
The clover leaves are deepening to the dew,

And I am still unsatisfied, untaught.  
You lie guarded in mystery, you go  
Into your night, and leave your lover naught.

Would I were Titan with immeasurable thews  
To hold you trembling, lover of mine, and know  
To the full the secret savour that you use

Now to my tormenting I would drain  
Your beauty to the last sharp glory of it ,  
You should work mightily through me, blood and  
brain

Your heart in my heart's mastery should burn,  
And you before my swift and arrogant wit  
Should be no longer proudly taciturn

You should bend back astonished at my kiss,  
Your wisdom should be armourer to my pride,  
And you, subdued, should yet be glad of this

The joys of great heroic lovers dead  
Should seem but market-gossiping beside  
The annunciation of our bridal bed

And now, my lover earth, I am a leaf,  
A wave of light, a bird's note, a blade sprung  
Towards the oblivion of the sickled sheaf ,

A mere mote driven against your royal ease,  
A tattered eager traveller among  
The myriads beating on your sanctuaries



I have no strength to crush you to my will,  
Your beauty is invulnerably zoned,  
Yet I, your undefeated lover still,

Exulting in your sap am clear of shame,  
And biding with you patiently am throned  
Above the flight of desolation's aim.

You may be mute, bestow no recompense  
On all the thriftless leaguers of my soul  
I am at your gates, O lover of mine, and thence

Will I not turn for any scorn you send,  
Rebuked, bemused, yet is my purpose whole,  
I shall be striving towards you till the end.

## *Lord of Time*

THAT I, some nameless æons hence,  
May be a god, god fashioning,  
With stars to break or recompense,  
Is that so great a thing ?

It may be so    Some giant hand  
May finger me as excellent clay,  
Till I shall walk a cleaner land  
In a more urgent day

To the artificer joy    But now  
Great days and passion of earth I crave,  
True lips, the red rose of the bough,  
The white rose of the wave

There are known walls wherein I move  
In joy no promised joy can veil,  
And all my mastery of love  
Is as a fireside tale

The word that shapes a word again,  
The storied song, the coloured year,

Laughter and tragic trust of men,  
And fear that will not fear,

That straw that blows about the gate,  
Those eyes that are my other sight,  
Of such are builded the estate  
I know before the night.

Life and fierce life and life alone  
Here upon earth I seek and claim,  
Till my proud flesh again is thrown  
To sea and wind and flame.

The gods are just , eternity  
May gird me for its lordlier clime ;  
But here, where time encircles me,  
I am a lord of time.

## *A Prayer*

LORD, not for light in darkness do we pray,  
Not that the veil be lifted from our eyes,  
Nor that the slow ascension of our day  
Be otherwise

Not for a clearer vision of the things  
Whereof the fashioning shall make us great,  
Not for remission of the peril and stings  
Of time and fate

Not for a fuller knowledge of the end  
Whereto we travel, bruised yet unafraid,  
Nor that the little healing that we lend  
Shall be repaid

Not these, O Lord We would not break the  
bars  
Thy wisdom sets about us, we shall climb  
Unfettered to the secrets of the stars  
In Thy good time

We do not crave the high perception swift  
When to refrain were well, and when fulfil,  
Nor yet the understanding strong to sift  
    The good from ill.

Not these, O Lord   For these Thou hast re-  
    vealed,  
We know the golden season when to reap  
The heavy-fruited treasure of the field,  
    The hour to sleep.

Not these.   We know the hemlock from the rose,  
The pure from stained, the noble from the base,  
The tranquil holy light of truth that glows  
    On Pity's face.

We know the paths wherein our feet should press,  
Across our hearts are written Thy decrees,  
Yet now, O Lord, be merciful to bless  
    With more than these.

Grant us the will to fashion as we feel,  
Grant us the strength to labour as we know,

Grant us the purpose, ribbed and edged with steel,  
To strike the blow

Knowledge we ask not—knowledge Thou hast lent,  
But, Lord, the will—there lies our bitter need,  
Give us to build above the deep intent  
The deed, the deed

# *Vigil*

I WATCH the good ships on the sea,  
Yet never ship comes home to me.

Out of the crowded ports they sail  
To crowded ports that cry them hail.

And still they bring no word to me,  
Tall-masted ships upon the sea.

As gallant messengers they go  
Laughing against all winds that blow.

Yet never ship upon the sea  
Bears blessed merchandise for me.

I watch them pass from friend to friend  
All day from world's end to world's end.

No pleasant ship comes down to me  
Along the long leagues of the sea.

Nor sign nor salutation made,  
Beyond the far sea-line they fade

Yet as I watch them on the sea  
All ships are piloted by me



## *Expectancy*

I know the night is heavy with her stars,  
    So much I know,  
I know the sun will lead the night away,  
    And lay his golden bars  
Over the fields and mountains and great seas,  
I know that he will usher in the day  
    With litanies  
Of birds and young dawn-winds   So much I  
    know,  
    So little though

I know that I am lost in a great waste,  
    A trackless world  
Of stars and golden days, where shadows go  
    In mute and secret haste,  
Paying no heed to supplicating cries  
Of spirits lost and troubled,   this I know.  
    The regal skies  
Utter no word, nor wind, nor changing sea,  
    It frightens me.

Yet I believe that somewhere, soon or late,  
    A peace will fall  
Upon the angry reaches of my mind ,  
    A peace initiate  
In some heroic hour when I behold  
A friend's long quested triumph, or unbind  
    The tressed gold  
From a child's laughing face   I still believe,—  
    So much believe

Or, when the reapers leave the swathed grain,  
    I'll look beyond  
The yellowing hazels in the twilight-tide,  
    Beyond the flowing plain,  
And see blue mountains piled against a sky  
Flung out in coloured ceremonial pride ,  
    Then haply I  
Shall be no longer troubled, but shall know,—  
    It may be so

# *The Building*

WHENCE these hods, and bricks of bright red clay,  
And swart men climbing ladders in the night ?

Stilled are the clamorous energies of day,  
The streets are dumb, and, prodigal of light,  
The lamps but shine upon a city of sleep.  
A step goes out into the silence, far  
Across the quiet roofs the hour is tolled  
From ghostly towers, the indifferent earth may keep  
That ragged flotsam shielded from the cold  
In earth's good time : not, moving among men,  
Shall he compel so fortunate a star  
Pavements I know, forsaken now, are strange,  
Alien walks not beautiful, that then,  
In the familiar day, are part of all  
My breathless pilgrimage, not beautiful, but dear ;  
The monotony of sound has suffered change,  
The eddies of wanton sound are spent, and clear  
To bleak monotones of silence fall

And, while the city sleeps, in the central poise  
Of quiet, lamps are flaming in the night,

Blown to long tongues by winds that moan  
between

The growing walls, and throwing misty light  
On swart men bearing bricks of bright red clay  
In laden hods, and ever the thin noise  
Of trowels deftly fashioning the clean  
Long lines that are the shaping of proud thought  
Ghost-like they move between the day and day,  
These men whose labour strictly shall be wrought  
Into the captive image of a dream  
Their sinews weary not, the plummet falls  
To measured use from steadfast hands apace,  
And momentarily the moist and levelled seam  
Knits brick to brick and momentarily the walls  
Bestow the wonder of form on formless space

And whence all these? The hod and plummet-  
line,

The trowels tapping, and the lamps that shine  
In long, dust-heavy beams from wall to wall,  
The mortar and the bricks of bright red clay,  
Ladder and corded scaffolding, and all  
The gear of common traffic—whence are they?  
And whence the men who use them?

When he came,

God upon chaos, crying in the name  
Of all adventurous vision that the void  
Should yield up man, and man, created, rose  
Out of the deep, the marvel of all things made,  
Then in immortal wonder was destroyed  
All worth of trivial knowledge, and the close  
Of man's most urgent meditation stayed  
Even as his first thought "Whence am I sprung?"  
What proud ecstatic mystery was pent  
In that first act for man's astonishment,  
From age to unconfessing age, among  
His manifold travel. And in all I see  
Of common daily usage is renewed  
This primal and ecstatic mystery  
Of chaos bidden into many-hued  
Wonders of form, life in the void create,  
And monstrous silence made articulate

Not the first word of God upon the deep  
Nor the first pulse of life along the day  
More marvellous than these new walls that sweep  
Starward, these lines that discipline the clay,  
These lamps swung in the wind that send their light

On swart men climbing ladders in the night  
No trowel-tap but sings anew for men  
The rapture of quickening water and continent,  
No mortared line but witnesses again  
Chaos transfigured into lineament

## *Forsaken*

THE word is said, and I no more shall know  
Aught of the changing story of her days,  
Nor any treasure that her lips bestow.

And I, who loving her was wont to praise  
All things in love, now reft of music go  
With silent step down unfrequented ways

My soul is like a lonely market-place,  
Where late were laughing folk and shining steeds  
And many things of comeliness and grace ,

And now between the stones are twisting weeds,  
No sound there is, nor any friendly face,  
Save for a bedesman telling o'er his beads.

## *The Soldier*

THE large report of fame I lack,  
And shining clasps and crimson scars,  
For I have held my bivouac  
Alone amid the untroubled stars

My battle-field has known no dawn  
Beclouded by a thousand spears ,  
I've been no mounting tyrant's pawn  
To buy his glory with my tears

It never seemed a noble thing  
Some little leagues of land to gain  
From broken men, nor yet to fling  
Abroad the thunderbolts of pain

Yet I have felt the quickening breath  
As peril heavy peril kissed—  
My weapon was a little faith,  
And fear was my antagonist



Not a brief hour of cannonade,  
But many days of bitter strife,  
Till God of His great pity laid  
Across my brow the leaves of life



## *The Fires of God*

### I

TIME gathers to my name ,  
Along the ways wheredown my feet have passed  
I see the years with little triumph crowned,  
Exulting not for perils dared, downcast  
And weary-eyed and desolate for shame  
Of having been unstirred of all the sound  
Of the deep music of the men that move  
Through the world's days in suffering and love

Poor barren years that brooded over-much  
On your own burden, pale and stricken years—  
Go down to your oblivion, we part  
With no reproach or ceremonial tears  
Henceforth my hands are lifted to the touch  
Of hands that labour with me, and my heart  
Hereafter to the world's heart shall be set  
And its own pain forget  
Time gathers to my name—  
Days dead are dark , the days to be, a flame  
Of wonder and of promise, and great cries  
Of travelling people reach me—I must rise

Was I not man ? Could I not rise alone  
 Above the shifting of the things that be,  
 Rise to the crest of all the stars and see  
 The ways of all the world as from a throne ?  
 Was I not man, with proud imperial will  
 To cancel all the secrets of high heaven ?  
 Should not my sole unbridled purpose fill  
 All hidden paths with light when once was riven  
 God's veil by my indomitable will ?

So dreamt I, little man of little vision,  
 Great only in unconsecrated pride ,  
 Man's pity grew from pity to derision,  
 And still I thought, " Albeit they deride,  
 Yet is it mine uncharted ways to dare  
 Unknown to these,  
 And they shall stumble darkly, unaware  
 Of solemn mysteries  
 Whereof the key is mine alone to bear."

So I forgot my God, and I forgot  
 The holy sweet communion of men,  
 And moved in desolate places, where are not  
 Meek hands held out with patient healing when

The hours are heavy with uncharitable pain ,  
No company but vain  
And arrogant thoughts were with me at my side  
And ever to myself I lied,  
Saying "Apart from all men thus I go  
To know the things that they may never know "

Then a great change befell .  
 Long time I stood  
 In witless hardihood  
 With eyes on one sole changeless vision set  
 The deep disturbèd fret  
 Of men who made brief tarrying in hell  
 On their earth travelling  
 It was as though the lives of men should be  
 Set circle-wise, whereof one little span  
 Through which all passed was blackened with the  
     wing  
 Of perilous evil, bateless misery,  
 But all beyond, making the whole complete  
 O'er which the travelling feet  
 Of every man  
 Made way or ever he might come to death,  
 Was odorous with the breath  
 Of honey-laden flowers, and alive  
 With sacrificial ministrations sweet  
 Of man to man, and swift and holy loves,  
 And large heroic hopes, whereby should thrive  
 Man's spirit as he moves  
 From dawn of life to the great dawn of death.

It was as though mine eyes were set alone  
Upon that woeful passage of despair,  
Until I held that life had never known  
Dominion but in this most troubled place  
Where many a ruined grace  
And many a friendless care  
Ran to and fro in sorrowful unrest  
Still in my hand I pressed  
Hope's fragile chalice, whence I drew deep  
draughts  
That heartened me that even yet should grow  
Out of this dread confusion, as of broken crafts  
Driven along ungovernable seas,  
Prosperous order, and that I should know  
After long vigil all the mysteries  
Of human wonder and of human fate

O fool, O only great  
In pride unhallowed, O most blind of heart !  
Confusion but more dark confusion bred,  
Grief nurtured grief, I cried aloud and said,  
"Through trackless ways the soul of man is  
hurled,  
No sign upon the forehead of the skies,  
No beacon, and no chart

Are given to him, and the inscrutable world  
But mocks his scars and fills his mouth with dust ”

*And lies bore lies*

*And lust bore lust,*

*And the world was heavy with flowerless rods,*

*And pride outran*

*The strength of a man*

*Who had set himself in the place of gods.*

IV

Soon was I then to gather bitter shame  
 Of spirit, I had been most wildly proud—  
 Yet in my pride had been  
 Some little courage, formless as a cloud,  
 Unpiloted save by a vagrant wind,  
 But still an earnest of the bonds that tame  
 The legionary hates, of sacred loves that lean  
 From the high soul of man towards his kind  
 And all my grief  
 Had been for those I watched go to and fro  
 In uncompassioned woe  
 Along that little span my unbelief  
 Had fashioned in my vision as all life  
 Now even this so little virtue waned,  
 For I became caught up into the strife  
 That I had pitied, and my soul was stained  
 At last by that most venomous despair,  
 Self-pity

I no longer was aware  
 Of any will to heal the world's unrest,  
 I suffered as it suffered, and I grew  
 Troubled in all my daily trafficking,  
 Not with the large heroic trouble known



By proud adventurous men who would atone  
With their own passionate pity for the sting  
And anguish of a world of peril and snares ,  
It was the trouble of a soul in thrall  
To mean despairs,  
Driven about a waste where neither fall  
Of words from lips of love, nor consolation  
Of grave eyes comforting, nor ministration  
Of hand or heart could pierce the deadly wall  
Of self of self, I was a living shame  
A broken purpose. I had stood apart  
With pride rebellious and defiant heart,  
And now my pride had perished in the flame.  
I cried for succour as a little child  
Might supplicate whose days are undefiled,  
For tutored pride and innocence are one.

*To the gloom has won  
A gleam of the sun  
And into the barren desolate ways  
A scent is blown  
As of meadows mown  
By cooling rivers in clover days.*

I turned me from that place in humble wise,  
 And fingers soft were laid upon mine eyes,  
 And I beheld the fruitful earth, with store  
 Of odorous treasure, full and golden grain,  
 Ripe orchard bounty, slender stalks that bore  
 Their flowered beauty with a meek content,  
 The prosperous leaves that loved the sun and rain,  
 Shy creatures unproved that came and went  
 In garrulous joy among the fostering green  
 And, over all, the changes of the day  
 And ordered year their mutable glory laid—  
 Expectant winter soberly arrayed,  
 The prudent diligent spring whose eyes have seen  
 The beauty of the roses uncreate,  
 Imperial June, magnificent, elate  
 Beholding all the ripening loves that stray  
 Among her blossoms, and the golden time  
 Of the full ear and bounty of the boughs,—  
 And the great hills and solemn chanting seas  
 And prodigal meadows, answering to the chime  
 Of God's good year, and bearing on their brows  
 The glory of processional mysteries  
 From dawn to dawn, the woven leaves and light

Of the high noon, the twilight secrecies,  
And the inscrutable wonder of the stars  
Flung out along the reaches of the night.

*And the ancient might  
Of the binding bars  
Waned as I woke to a new desire  
For the choric song  
Of exultant, strong  
Earth-passionate men with souls of fire.*

## VI

'Twas given me to hear As I beheld—  
 With a new wisdom, tranquil, asking not  
 For mystic revelation—this glory long forgot,  
 This re-discovered triumph of the earth  
 In high creative will and beauty's pride  
 Established beyond the assaulting years,  
 It came to me, a music that compelled  
 Surrender of all tributary fears,  
 Full throated, fierce, and rhythmic with the wide  
 Beat of the pilgrim winds and labouring seas,  
 Sent up from all the harbouring ways of earth  
 Wherein the travelling feet of men have trod,  
 Mounting the firmamental silences  
 And challenging the golden gates of God

*We bear the burden of the years  
 Clean-limbed, clear-hearted, open browed,  
 Albeit sacramental tears  
 Have dimmed our eyes, we know the proud  
 Content of men who sweep unbowed  
 Before the legionary fears  
 In sorrow we have grown to be  
 The masters of adversity*

*Wise of the storied ages we,  
Of perils dared and crosses borne,  
Of heroes bound by no decree  
Of laws defiled or faiths outworn,  
Of poets who have held in scorn  
All mean and tyrannous things that be ,  
We prophesy with lips that sped  
The songs of the prophetic dead.*     '

*Wise of the brief beloved span  
Of this our glad earth-travelling,  
Of beauty's bloom and ordered plan,  
Of love and love's compassioning,  
Of all the dear delights that spring  
From man's communion with man ;  
We cherish every hour that strays  
Adown the cataract of the days.*

*We see the clear untroubled skies,  
We see the summer of the rose  
And laugh, nor grieve that clouds will rise  
And wax with every wind that blows,*

*Nor that the blossoming time will close,  
For beauty seen of humble eyes  
Immortal habitation has  
Though beauty's form may pale and pass*

*Wise of the great unshapen age,  
To which we move with measured tread  
All girt with passionate truth 'o wage  
High battle for the word unsaid,  
The song unsung, the cause unled,  
The freedom that no hope can gauge ,  
Strong armed, sure footed, iron willed  
We sift and weave, we break and build*

*Into one hour we gather all  
The years gone down, the years unwrought,  
Upon our ears brave measures fall  
Across uncharted spaces brought,  
Upon our lips the words are caught  
Wherewith the dead the unborn call ,  
From love to love, from height to height  
We press and none may curb our might*

O blessed voices, O compassionate hands,  
Calling and healing, O great-hearted brothers !  
I come to you. Ring out across the lands  
Your benediction, and I too will sing  
With you, and haply kindle in another's  
Dark desolate hour the flame you stirred in me  
O bountiful earth, in adoration meet  
I bow to you , O glory of years to be,  
I too will labour to your fashioning  
Go down, go down, unweariable feet,  
Together we will march towards the ways  
Wherein the marshalled hosts of morning wait  
In sleepless watch, with banners wide unfurled  
Across the skies in ceremonial state,  
To greet the men who lived triumphant days,  
And stormed the secret beauty of the world.

## *Challenge*

You fools behind the panes who peer  
At the strong black anger of the sky,  
Come out and feel the storm swing by,  
Aye, take its blow on your lips, and hear  
The wind in the branches cry

No Leave us to the day's device,  
Draw to your blinds and take your ease,  
Grow peak'd in the face and crook'd in the knees ,  
Your sinews could not pay the price  
When the storm goes through the trees



# *The Loom of the Poets*

(TO THOMAS HARDY)

## I

THEY who are sceptred of the poets' race  
Their high dominion bear by this alone  
That they report the world as they have known  
The world, nor seek with slavish hands to trace  
Poor profitable smiles upon the face  
Of truth when smiles are none, nor fear to own  
The bitterness of beauty overthrown,  
But hold in hate the gilded lie's disgrace.

And such are you, O singer of the gloom  
Where-through in travail you have slowly won  
Albeit your song is heavy with the doom  
Of men whose little strivings are foredone,  
Yet is it woven on the living loom  
Of your own suffering beneath the sun.

## II

And herein lies great solace    Who shall say  
     If this austere and lonely utterance  
     Be closer knit to truth than theirs who dance  
 With happy hearts along the laughing way ?  
 Or matters it ? We know that you as they  
     Tell of the truth as you have seen it glance  
     Across the shadowed tracks of fate and chance,  
 At best a fitful promise of the day

Great patience must be ours ere we may know  
     The secrets held by labyrinthine time ,  
 The ways are rough, the journeying is slow,  
     The perils deep,—till we have conquered these  
 And break at length upon the golden clime  
     He serves us best who sings but as he sees

## *The Dead Critic*

Not of the high heroic line was he  
Who wrought the world's deep music, but he knew  
The spring pellucid whence rapt poets drew  
Brave draughts of Hippocrene ; he held in fee  
The songs that woke to immortality,  
Trembling from other lips. His loving grew  
From loving unto prophecy , he threw  
Untruth from out the fields of poesy

Yea, though he sang not, he was unto song  
A light, a benediction His desire  
Was but to serve his heroes, and we reap  
The fruit of his humility. Among  
Their names shall his be spoken, and their quire  
Shall let him fall upon no barren sleep.

## *Lines for the Opening of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre*

To you good ease, and grace to love us well  
To us good ease, and grace some tale to tell  
Worthy your love We stand with one consent  
To plead anew a holy argument—  
For art is holy We, to whom there falls  
The charge that men may see within these walls  
The comely chronicle of comely plays,  
You, who shall quicken us with blame or praise  
Desire alike but this, that here shall spring  
Such issue of our labour as may bring  
Fresh laurels to the altars that have known  
Service of men whose passion might atone  
For worlds than this more faithless, men whose names  
Are very life—aye, swift and urgent flames  
Of living are they These are over us  
To lighten all our travel Aeschylus  
Euripides, the Sophoclean song,  
And Aristophanes who captured wrong  
In nets of laughter, lords of the Attic stage,  
The fourfold Greek dominion, and the age

Of nameless poets when the hope began  
To quicken from the blood of *Everyman*  
Into the splendour of Marlowe's kingly lust  
Of kingly life, the glory that thieves nor rust  
Can ever spoil, whose name is manifold  
Ford, Massinger, Dekker, Webster aureoled  
With light of hell made holy, Middleton,  
Chapman, Beaumont and Fletcher, aye, and one  
Whom even these the lords of beauty's passion  
Might crown for beauty's high imperial fashion  
In classic calm of intellectual rule,  
Ben Jonson. Sirs, I am nor wit nor fool  
To speak in praise of him whose name is praise,  
Whose word is on the forehead of the days,  
Shakespeare, our master tried and proved how well,  
Mortality's immortal chronicle.

Under the warrant of these men we sail,  
And theirs whose later labour these might hail,  
Congreve and Otway the Good-Natured Man, ,  
Proud tattered Oliver : Dick Sheridan,  
Who played at passion, but free-born of wit  
Put scandal out to school and laughed at it ,  
These few that stand between the golden age  
When poets made a marvel of the stage

---

And—do we dare to dream it ?—an age that stirred  
But yesterday, whereof the dawning word,—  
Spoken when Ibsen spake, and here reset  
To many tunes on lips untutored yet  
For speech Olympian, albeit pure of will,—  
Shall ripen into witness that we still  
Are countrymen of those glad poets dead ,  
The seed is sown, the barren days are sped  
And they who sowed, are sowing ? He beguiled  
By who shall say what envious madness, Wilde,  
Misfortune's moth and laughter's new wing feather,  
Remembering now no black spiteful weather  
Hankin, and he, the cleanser of our day,  
Whose art is both a Preface and a Play,  
And he who pities, as poets have pitied, life  
Of *Justice* reft, so driven and torn in *Strife*,  
And one who cries in *Haste* some news of man,  
And one who finds in the bruised hearts of *Nan*  
And *Pompey* tragic and old yet timeless things  
And that dead Play boy, and his peer who sings  
Yet of Cuchulain by the western sea—  
Of these is sown the seed that yet shall be  
A heavy-waggoned harvest, masters mine,  
Gathered by men whom now the immoderate wine  
Of song is making ready

In these walls

Look not for that light trickery that falls  
To death at birth, wrought piecemeal at the will  
Of apes who seek to ply their mimic skill :  
Here shall the player work as work he may,  
Yet shall he work in service of the play.  
Nor shall you here find pitiful release  
From life's large pressure, nay, but new increase  
Of life made urgent by these master-men  
Who are our captains. Life, and life again  
Tragic or brave, free-witted, gentle, signed  
Of beauty's passion or the adventurous mind,  
Or light as orchard blossom, motley wear,  
But life's wear always that shall be our care  
And all shall surely follow. What may be  
Hereafter to the heavens, to us to see  
No will transgressing on the poet's wish,  
To you to judge the meat before the dish.  
May you that watch and we that serve so grow  
In wisdom as adventuring we go  
That some unwavering light from us may shine.  
We have the challenge of the mighty line  
God grant us grace to give the countersign.

## *Epilogue for a Masque*

A LITTLE time they lived again, and lo !  
Back to the quiet night the shadows go,  
And the great folds of silence once again  
Are over fools and kings and fighting-men

A little while they went with stumbling feet,  
With spears of hate, and love all flowery sweet,  
With wondering hearts and bright adventurous  
wills,  
And now their dust is on a thousand hills

We dream of them, as men unborn shall dream  
Of us, who strive a little with the stream  
Before we too go out beyond the day,  
And are as much a memory as they

And Death, so coming, shall not seem a thing  
Of any fear, nor terrible his wing  
We too shall be a tale on earth, and time  
Shall shape our pilgrimage into a rhyme



# *A Sabbath Day*

IN FIVE WATCHES

## I. MORNING

(TO M. C.)

You were three men and women two,  
And well I loved you, all of you,  
And well we kept the Sabbath day  
The bells called out of Malvern town,  
But never bell could call us down  
As we went up the hill away.

Was it a thousand years ago  
Or yesterday that men were so  
Zealous of creed and argument ?  
Here wind is brother to the rain,  
And the hills laugh upon the plain,  
And the old brain-gotten feuds are spent

Bring lusty laughter, lusty jest,  
Bring each the song he names the best,  
Bring eager thought and speech that's keen,  
Tell each his tale and tell it out,  
The only shame be prudent doubt,  
Bring bodies where the lust is clean.

## II FULL DAY

(TO K D)

WE moved along the gravelled way  
Between the laurels and the yews,  
Some touch of old enchantment lay  
About us, some remembered news  
Of men who rode among the trees  
With burning dreams of Camelot,  
Whose names are beauty's litanies,  
As Galahad and Launcelot

We looked along the vaulted gloom  
Of boughs unstripped of winter's bane,  
As for some pride of scarf and plume  
And painted shield and brodered rein,  
And through the cloven laurel walls  
We searched the darkling pines and pale  
Beech boles and woodbine coronals,  
As for the passing of the Grail

But Launcelot no travel keeps,  
For brother Launcelot is dead,  
And brother Galahad he sleeps  
This long while in his quiet bed,

And we are all the knights that pass  
Among the yews and laurels now.  
They are but fruit among the grass,  
And we but fruit upon the bough.

No coloured blazon meets us here  
Of all that courtly company ,  
Elaine is not, nor Guenevere,  
The dream is but of dreams that die  
But yet the purple violet lies  
Beside the golden daffodil,  
And women strong of limb and wise  
And fierce of blood are with us still

And never through the woodland goes  
The Grail of that forgotten quest,  
But still about the woodland flows  
The sap of God made manifest  
In boughs that labour to their time,  
And birds that gossip secret things,  
And eager lips that seek to rhyme  
The latest of a thousand springs

### III DUSK

(TO E S V)

WE come from the laurels and daffodils  
Down to the homestead under the fell,  
We've gathered our hunger upon the hills,  
And that is well

Howbeit to morrow gives or takes,  
And leads to barren or flowering ways,  
We've a linen cloth and wheaten cakes,  
For which be praise

Here in the valley at lambing time  
The shepherd folk of their watching tell,  
While the shadows up to the beacon climb,  
And that is well

Let be what may when we make an end  
Of the laughter and labour of all our days,  
We've men to friend and women to friend,  
For whom be praise

## IV. EVENSONG

(TO B. M.)

COME, let us tell it over,  
Each to each by the fireside,  
How that earth has been a swift adventure for us,  
And the watches of the day as a gay song and a  
right song,  
And now the traveller wind has found a bed,  
And the sheep crowd under the thorn.

Good was the day and our travelling,  
And now there is evensong to sing.

Night, and along the valleys  
Watch the eyes of the homesteads  
The dark hills are very still and still are the stars  
Patiently under the ploughlands the wheat moves  
and the barley.  
The secret hour of love is upon the sky,  
And our thought in praise is aflame

Sing evensong as well we may  
For our travel upon this Sabbath day

Earth, we have known you truly,  
Heard your mutable music,  
Have been your lovers and felt the savour of you,  
And you have quickened in us the blood's fire and  
the heart's fire  
We have wooed and striven with you and made you  
ours  
By the strength sprung out of your loins

Lift the latch on its twisted thong,  
And an end be made of our evensong

## V. NIGHT

(TO H. S. S.)

THE barriers of sleep are crossed  
And I alone am yet awake,  
Keeping another Pentecost  
For that new visitation's sake  
Of life descending on the hills  
In blackthorn bloom and daffodils.

At peace upon my pillow lain  
I celebrate the spirit come  
In spring's immutable youth again  
Across the lands of Christendom ;  
I hear in all the choral host  
The coming of the Holy Ghost

The sacrament of bough and blade,  
Of populous folds and building birds  
I take, till now an end is made  
Of praise and ceremonial words,  
And I too turn myself to keep  
The quiet festival of sleep.

*March 1913.*

## *Wed*

I MARRIED him on Christmas morn,—  
Ah woe betide, ah woe betide,  
Folk said I was a comely bride,—  
Ah me forlorn

All braided was my golden hair,  
And heavy then, and shining then,  
My limbs were sweet to madden men,—  
O cunning snare

My beauty was a thing they say  
Of large renown,—O dread renown,—  
Its rumour travelled through the town,  
Alas the day

His kisses burn my mouth and brows,—  
O burning kiss, O barren kiss,—  
My body for his worship is,  
And so he vows

But daily many men draw near  
With courtly speech and subtle speech ,



I gather from the lips of each  
A deadly fear.

As he grows sullen I grow cold,  
And whose the blame ? Not mine the blame ,  
Their passions round me as a flame  
All fiercely fold.

And oh, to think that he might be  
So proudly set, above them set,  
If he might but awaken yet  
The soul of me.

Will no man seek and seeking find  
The soul of me, the soul of me ?  
Nay, even as they are, so is he,  
And all are blind.

On Christmas morning we were wed,  
Ah me the morn, the luckless morn ;  
Now poppies burn along the corn,  
Would I were dead.

## *Uncrowned*

SHE drew the patterned curtains back  
And let the moonlight in  
And the cool night    There was no lack  
Of lures that lead to sin  
About her grey eyes tenanted  
By secret laughters proud,  
Her ripe lips were a miracle,  
Her hair fell as a cloud  
About her shoulders, and she stood  
Most beautiful, a flame  
Of passion tortured in the winds,  
Her womanhood a shame,  
Her beauty burning as a wound,  
Her love a thing of blame

A loathed thing her love it seemed,  
For ill her love had grown  
As rotting fruit beneath the boughs  
Among the grass unmown,  
Beautiful once in sun and rain  
And good winds cheerly blown

Men came, a courtly crowd, to her,  
And spoke of love aloud to her,  
Day-long, day-long, they flattered her,  
And called her beauty good,  
But no man came with secret flame  
To cover her and lend her name  
A glory that should leaven all  
Her holy womanhood  
Her hungry womanhood.

She watched the other women go  
With quiet mates, the women so  
Far set below her in the things  
That make a woman fair.  
And now she leant across the night,  
Breast open to the soft moonlight,  
And silver arrows of the moon  
Were splintered in her hair.

“ O God of all the yellow fields  
Of stubble, God of stars,  
Why should the woman that is me  
Be prisoned in the bars

Fashioned by men because their eyes  
Are sealed, their sweet souls dead—  
Why should my armoured pride so make  
Uncomraded my bed ?

“ For that my beauty is a thing  
To make a proven tale,  
My speech to keep tired lids awake,  
My laughter like a sail  
Rippled upon a golden sea,  
My wit a thing of worth,  
They make a common troll of me,  
Lord of the quiet earth

“ My name is heard throughout the land,  
Men sing my body's praise,  
They listen when I laugh, my words  
Are coveted, my days  
Are rich in tribute, yet I find  
No man that dares to be  
Lord of the secret heart I bear,  
The woman that is me

“ How shall I speak ?   How, being proud,  
Shall I cry out that this  
Woman they praise is hungering  
For one unfettered kiss,  
That she they make a song-burden  
Is starving while they sing,  
Starving among them all, O God,  
How shall I cry this thing ?

“ Hidden within my body’s flame  
And flames which are my soul  
A secret beauty lies.   Until  
One rides to make it whole,  
To set it on his brow, to make  
It free yet never free,  
Crying for birth goes wandering  
The woman that is me.

“ And while I wait I have no joy  
Of homage nor the things  
That make the seasons beautiful,  
And folded are the wings

Whereon—ah well, night moves apace,  
Anew the dawn tide runs,—  
Day and the little light that is  
The shadow of Thy suns ”

She curtained out the moonlight, pale  
In marriage with the day  
As golden nets her golden hair  
Along the pillows lay ,  
And the wind stirred among the leaves,  
And God's work went its way

## *Derelict*

THE cloudy peril of the seas,  
The menace of mid-winter days,  
May break the scented boughs of ease  
And lock the lips of praise,  
But every sea its harbour knows,  
And every winter wakes to spring,  
And every broken song the rose  
Shall yet re-sing.

But comfortable love once spent  
May not re-shape its broken trust,  
Or find anew the old content,  
Dishonoured in the dust ,  
No port awaits those tattered sails,  
No sun rides high above that gloom,  
Unchronicled those half-told tales  
Shall time entomb.

## *Reckoning*

I HEARD my love go laughing  
Beyond the bolted door,  
I saw my love go riding  
Across the windy moor,  
And I would give my love no word  
Because of evil tales I heard

Let fancy men go laughing,  
Let light men ride away,  
Bruised corn is not for my mill,  
What's paid I will not pay,—  
And so I thought because of this  
Gossip that poisoned clasp and kiss

Four hundred men went riding,  
And he the best of all,  
A jolly man for labour,  
A sinewy man and tall,  
I watched him go beyond the hill,  
And shaped my anger with my will



At night my love came riding  
Across the dusky moor,  
And other two rode with him  
Who knocked my bolted door,  
And called me out and bade me see  
How quiet a man a man could be.

And now the tales that stung me  
And gave my pride its rule,  
Are worth a beggar's broken shoe  
Or the sermon of a fool,  
And all I know and all I can  
Is, false or true, he was my man.

## *Pierrot*

*Pierrot alone,  
And then Pierrette,  
And then a story to forget*

### *Pierrot alone*

Pierrette among the apple boughs  
Come down and take a Pierrot's kiss,  
The moon is white upon your brows,  
Pierrette among the apple boughs,  
Your lips are cold, and I would set  
A rose upon your lips, Pierrette,  
A rosy kiss,  
Pierrette, Pierrette

### *And then Pierrette*

I've left my apple boughs, Pierrot,  
A shadow now is on my face,  
But still my lips are cold, and O  
No rose is on my lips, Pierrot,  
You laugh, and then you pass away  
Among the scented leaves of May,  
And on my face  
The shadows stay

*And then a story to forget.*

The petals fall upon the grass,  
And I am crying in the dark,  
The clouds above the white moon pass  
My tears are falling on the grass ;  
Pierrot, Pierrot, I heard your vows  
And left my blossomed apple boughs,  
And sorrows dark  
Are on my brows

## *Love's Personality*

If I had never seen  
Thy sweet grave face,  
If I had never known  
Thy pride as of a queen,  
Yet would another's grace  
Have led me to her throne

I should have loved as well  
Not loving thee,  
My faith had been as strong  
Wrought by another spell,  
Her love had grown to be  
As thine for fire and song

Yet is our love a thing  
Alone, austere,  
A new and sacred birth  
That we alone could bring  
Through flames of faith and fear  
To pass upon the earth

As one who makes a rhyme  
Of his fierce thought,  
With momentary art  
May challenge change and time,  
So is the love we wrought  
Not greatest, but apart.

## *Love*

LORD of the host of deep desires  
That spare no sting, yet are to me  
Sole echo of the silver choirs  
Whose dwelling is eternity,

With all save thee my soul is pressed  
In high dispute from day to day,  
But, Love, at thy most high behest  
I make no answer, and obey

## *Lovers to Lovers*

OUR love forsworn  
Was very love upon a day ;  
Bitterness now, forlorn,  
This tattered love once went as proud a way  
As any born.

You well have kept  
Your love from all corrupting things,  
Your house of love is swept  
And bright for use , whatso each season brings  
You may accept

In pride. But we ?  
Our date of love is dead. Our blind  
Brief moment was to be  
The sum, yet was it signed as yours, and signed  
Indelibly.

## *The Inviolable Hour*

If ever you with riches should be bought,  
And all your life become a little thing,  
And all the bright adventure of your thought  
Be curbed, if time should bring  
The passionate promise of your youth to naught,

If you should never find the lordly will  
To stir your beauty to a flame of flowers,  
If, robed in precious merchandise, you still  
Are subject to the powers  
That bruise the grain God sows along the hill,

If you should sell yourself in any wise  
Save at love's bidding, and so fall to be  
Life's drudge and outcast, yet, for that your eyes  
No longer then should see  
The light that once they borrowed from the skies,

You went of your own sorrow unaware  
Save in swift moments of remembered days  
When still the stars were tangled in your hair,  
And all your limbs were praise,  
And all your movement as a lyric prayer—



Should it be so, will you remember this,  
That once a man, who watched your beauty grow,  
And knew the waxing peril of your kiss,  
And saw you turn and go,  
Unweaponed, towards the world's untried abyss,

Made in his heart a record that your soul  
Immortal beauty had, that you were strong  
To keep the proudest purpose of you whole,  
To meet the proudest wrong  
Should look your vagrant spirit to control,

Will you remember this ? The days may prove  
The things alone of little worth in you,  
You may beguile yourself that life and love,  
So seared, have had their due,  
That you in your right constellation move.

It may be so , and you may violate  
The seedling hope sown in a waste of fears,  
Yet in his thought shall you be consecrate  
With your immortal peers,  
Your laughter true, your soul immaculate.

## *Liegewoman*

You may not wear immortal leaves  
Nor yet go laurelled in your days,  
But he believes  
Who loves you with most intimate praise  
That none on earth has ever gone,  
In whom a cleaner spirit shone

You may be unremembered when  
Our chronicles are piled in dust  
No matter then—  
None ever bore a lordlier lust  
To know the savour sweet or sour  
Down to the dregs of every hour

And this your epitaph shall be—  
“ Within life’s house her eager words  
Continually  
Lightened as wings of arrowy birds  
She was life’s house-fellow, she knew  
The passion of him, soul and thew ”

## *From London*

God of the cherry-bloom in the orchards of calm,  
Of sunlight on the little chestnut-leaves,  
Of ghost-winged bees round the tassels of the palm,  
Be near me in this place. My spirit grieves

I shall return unto thy kingdom soon,  
There is one waits my coming, and her brows  
Are gravely turned upon thy heaped and fragrant  
boon  
Of daffodils and twisted budding boughs

The scent of the ploughlands is calling me away,  
The chatter of the rooks, the open skies,  
And she I know is waiting with the glory of the day  
And the shadow of the night in her eyes.

## *Roundels of the Year*

*I caught the changes of the year  
In soft and fragile nets of song,  
For you to whom my days belong*

*For you to whom each day is dear  
Of all the high processional throng,  
I caught the changes of the year  
In soft and fragile nets of song*

*And here some sound of beauty, here  
Some note of ancient, ageless wrong  
Reshaping as my lips were strong,  
I caught the changes of the year  
In soft and fragile nets of song,  
For you to whom my days belong*

The spring is passing through the land  
In web of ghostly green arrayed,  
And blood is warm in man and maid.

The arches of desire have spanned  
The barren ways, the debt is paid,  
The spring is passing through the land  
In web of ghostly green arrayed.

Sweet scents along the winds are fanned  
From shadowy wood and secret glade  
Where beauty blossoms unafraid,  
The spring is passing through the land  
In web of ghostly green arrayed,  
And blood is warm in man and maid.

II

Proud insolent June with burning lips  
Holds riot now from sea to sea,  
And shod in sovran gold is she

To the full flood of reaping slips  
The seeding tide by God's decrec,  
Proud insolent June with burning lips  
Holds riot now from sea to sea

And all the goodly fellowships  
Of bird and bloom and beast and tree  
Are gallant of her company—  
Proud insolent June with burning lips  
Holds riot now from sea to sea,  
And shod in sovran gold is she

### III

The loaded sheaves are harvested,  
The sheep are in the stubbled fold,  
The tale of labour crowned is told.

The wizard of the year has spread  
A glory over wood and wold,  
The loaded sheaves are harvested,  
The sheep are in the stubbled fold.

The yellow apples and the red  
Bear down the boughs, the hazels hold  
No more their fruit in cups of gold.  
The loaded sheaves are harvested,  
The sheep are in the stubbled fold,  
The tale of labour crowned is told.

IV

The year is lapsing into time  
 Along a deep and songless gloom,  
 Unchapleted of leaf or bloom

And mute between the dusk and prime  
 The diligent earth resets her loom,—  
     The year is lapsing into time  
     Along a deep and songless gloom

While o'er the snows the seasons chime  
 Their golden hopes to re-illumine  
 The brief eclipse about the tomb,  
     The year is lapsing into time  
     Along a deep and songless gloom  
     Unchapleted of leaf or bloom



*Not wise as cunning scholars are,  
 With curious words upon your tongue,  
 Are you for whom my song is sung*

*But you are wise of cloud and star,  
 And winds and boughs all blossom-hung,  
     Not wise as cunning scholars are,  
     With curious words upon your tongue*

*Surely, clear child of earth, some far  
 Dim Dryad-haunted groves among,  
 Your lips to lips of knowledge clung  
     Not wise as cunning scholars are,  
     With curious words upon your tongue,  
     Are you for whom my song is sung.*

## *The Miracle*

COME, sweetheart, listen, for I have a thing  
Most wonderful to tell you—news of spring

Albeit winter still is in the air,  
And the earth troubled, and the branches bare,

Yet down the fields to day I saw her pass—  
The spring—her feet went shining through the  
grass

She touched the ragged hedgerows—I have seen  
Her finger-prints, most delicately green ,

And she has whispered to the crocus leaves,  
And to the garrulous sparrows in the eaves

Swiftly she passed and shyly, and her fair  
Young face was hidden in her cloudy hair

She would not stay, her season is not yet,  
But she has reawakened, and has set

The sap of all the world astir, and rent  
Once more the shadows of our discontent.

Triumphant news a miracle I sing  
The everlasting miracle of spring

## *Dominion*

I WENT beneath the sunny sky  
When all things bowed to June's desire,—  
The pansy with its steadfast eye,  
The blue shells on the lupin spire,  
The swelling fruit along the boughs,  
The grass grown heady in the rain,  
Dark roses fitted for the brows  
Of queens great kings have sung in vain ,  
My little cat with tiger bars,  
Bright claws all hidden in content ,  
Swift birds that flashed like darkling stars  
Across the cloudy continent ,  
The wiry coated fellow curled  
Stump tailed upon the sunny flags ,  
The bees that sacked a coloured world  
Of treasure for their honey-bags  
And all these things seemed very glad,  
The sun, the flowers, the birds on wing,  
The jolly beasts, the furry-clad  
Fat bees, the fruit, and everything

But gladder than them all was I,  
Who, being man, might gather up  
The joy of all beneath the sky,  
And add their treasure to my cup,  
  
And travel every shining way,  
And laugh with God in God's delight,  
Create a world for every day,  
And store a dream for every night.

## *A Warwickshire Song*

THERE are no oaks in all the shires  
I love so well as those that spill  
Smooth acorns from their mailed cups  
Along the Warwick lanes , and still  
The Avon holds as clear a way  
As Tweed or Thames, and never blows  
The wind along a sweeter land  
Than that wheredown the Avon goes

On northern hill and Sussex down,  
In Derby dale and Lincoln fen,  
I've trafficked with the winds of God  
And talked and laughed with many men  
I've seen the ploughshare break the earth  
From Cumberland to woody Kent ,  
I've followed Severn to the sea,  
And heard the swollen tide of Trent

I know the south, I know the north,  
I've walked the counties up and down,  
I've seen the ships go round the coast  
From Mersey dock to London town ,

I've seen the spires of east and west,  
And sung for joy of what I've seen,  
But oh, my heart is ever fain  
Of ways where Avon's oaks are green.

## *At Grafton*

God laughed when he made Grafton  
That's under Bredon Hill,  
A jewel in a jewelled plain  
The seasons work their will  
On golden thatch and crumbling stone,  
And every soft-lipped breeze  
Makes music for the Grafton men  
In comfortable trees

God's beauty over Grafton  
Stole into roof and wall,  
And hallowed every paved path  
And every lowly stall,  
And to a woven wonder  
Conspired with one accord  
The labour of the servant,  
The labour of the Lord

And momentarily to Grafton  
Comes in from vale and wold  
The sound of sheep unshepherded,  
The sound of sheep in fold,



And, blown along the bases  
Of lands that set their wide  
Frank brows to God, comes chanting  
The breath of Bristol tide.

## *A Picture*

Two candles oaken set upon blue folds,  
No other light save the unclouded stars,  
Their clusters broken by the scented downs  
Massed up above us in the southern sky  
Two candles oaken set upon blue folds,  
Sending their little light along the board  
Laid out beneath a honeysuckle hedge  
In the cool dusk, with hospitable fare  
Blue folds clear cut along the table's rim,  
Until they meet the delicate blue robe  
Of one who sends soft laughter through the hush,  
Her face the haunt of clear repose and swift  
Ripples of humour, gracious, mellowing

We shall remember in the barren days  
Blue folds and raiment, little oaken lights,  
The moth stars flitting through the ghostly dusk,  
Fair brow and slender throat and kindly speech,  
A hermitage of leaves and shadows, set  
In the deep hollow of the Sussex hills

## *January Dusk*

AUSTERE and clad in sombre robes of grey,  
With hands upfolded and with silent wings,  
In unimpassioned mystery the day  
Passes ; a lonely thrush its requiem sings.

The dust of night is tangled in the boughs  
Of leafless lime and lilac, and the pine  
Grows blacker, and the star upon the brows  
Of sleep is set in heaven for a sign.

Earth's little weary peoples fall on peace  
And dream of breaking buds and blossoming,  
Of primrose airs, of days of large increase,  
And all the coloured retinue of spring

## *Morning Thanksgiving*

THANK God for sleep in the long quiet night,  
For the clear day calling through the little leaded  
panes,  
For the shining well-water and the warm golden  
light,  
And the paths washed white by singing rains

We thank Thee, O God, for exultation born  
Of the kiss of Thy winds, for life among the leaves,  
For the whirring wings that pass about the wonder  
of the morn,  
For the changing plumes of swallows gliding  
upwards to their eaves

For the treasure of the garden, the gillyflowers of  
gold,  
The prouder petalled tulips, the primrose full of  
spring,  
For the crowded orchard boughs, and the swelling  
buds that hold  
A yet unwoven wonder, to Thee our praise we  
bring

Thank God for good bread, for the honey in the comb,  
For the brown-shelled eggs, for the clustered  
blossoms set

Beyond the open window in a pink and cloudy foam,  
For the laughing loves among the branches met.

For the kind-faced women we bring our thanks to 'Thee,  
With shapely mothering arms and grave eyes clear  
and blithe,

For the tall young men, strong-thewed as men may  
be,

For the old man bent above his scythe.

For earth's little secret and innumerable ways,

For the carol and the colour, Lord, we bring  
What things may be of thanks, and that Thou hast lent  
our days

Eyes to see and ears to hear and lips to sing.

## *Fune Dance*

THE chestnut cones were in the lanes,  
Blushing, and eyed with ebony,  
And young oak-apples lovingly  
Clung to their stems with rosy veins  
Threading their glossy amber, still  
As wind may be, among the bloom  
Of lilac and the burning broom  
The dear wind moved deliciously,  
And stayed upon the fragrant hill  
And lightened on the sea,  
And brushed the nettles nodding through  
The budding globes of cloudy may,  
And wavelike flowed upon the blue  
Flowers of the woods

It was a day  
When pearled blossom of peach and pear  
Of blossoming season made an end,  
Drifting along the sunlight, rare  
Of beauty as thoughts between friend and  
friend

*That have no cunning, but merely know*  
The way of truth for the heart is so

It was such a time at the birth of June,  
When the day was hushed at the hour of  
noon,

And whispering leaves gave out a tune  
Ghostly as moves the bodiless moon  
High in the full-day skies of June,  
That they passed, a throng  
Of toilers whose eyes  
Were dull with toiling passed along,  
By a path that lies  
Between the city of mean emprise  
And a forest set in mellow lands,  
Far out from the city of broken hands.

Meanly clad, with bodies worn,  
They came upon the forest hour,  
From open fields of springing corn  
To cloistered shades  
They passed, from June light to June bower,  
Tall men, and maids  
Deep-bosomed, apt for any seed  
That life should passionately sow,  
Yet pale and troubled of a creed  
Cried out by men who nothing know

90

Of joy's diviner excellence  
Along the silent glades they stept,  
Till, flowing in each drowsy sense,  
June came upon them, and they slept

Beneath cool clustered branch and bloom,  
Littered with stars of amethyst,  
Sun-arrows glancing through the gloom,  
They slept, the lush young bracken kissed  
The tired forms Ah, well-away,  
Within so wide a peace to see  
Fellows who measure every day  
Merely the roads of misery

Tall men, deep bosomed maids were they,  
As who should face the world and run  
Fleet footed down the laughing way,  
With brows set fearless to the sun,  
But slackened were the rippling thews  
And all clean moods of courage dead,  
Defeated by ignoble use  
And sullen dread

So in the sweet June-tide they slept,  
Nor any dream of healing deep



Came over them , heart-sick they kept  
A troubled sleep ,  
Companions of calamity,  
Their sleep was but remembered pain,  
And all their hunger but to be  
Poor pilgrims in oblivion's train

The stems each had a little shadow  
In the early afternoon,  
When the toilers first were lured  
By a music long immured  
In the central forest ways  
Where no human footfall strays,  
To the dreaming dance of June

One by one they woke, their faces  
Still with some new wonder,  
As when in quiet shadowy places  
Wandering hands may move asunder  
Secret foliage, and intrude  
On the ancestral solitude  
Of some untutored forest thing  
Neither doubt nor fear they bring,  
But just a strange new wonder.

So now the toilers woke    No thought  
Of the old-time trouble came  
Over them , the cares deep-wrought,  
Furrowing, by years of shame,  
Lightened, as upon their ears  
Fell a music very low,  
Sweet with moving of the years,  
Burdened with the beat and flow  
Of a garnered ecstasy  
Gathered from the deeps of pain,  
Music vaster than the sea,  
Softer than the rain

Then they rose,—the music played  
But a little way ahead  
And with never question made  
They were well to follow    Red  
And gold and opal flashed the noon  
On lichened trunk    Their raiment mean  
Grew heavy in the dance of June,  
And man and maid among the green  
Unburdened them, and stood revealed  
In clean unblushing loveliness,  
Clear glowing limbs, all supple, steeled  
And shining , many a streaming tress

Slipped beautiful to breast and knee,  
They proved a world where was no sin,  
Exultant, pure in passion, free,  
Young captives bidden to begin  
New being. Sweet the music called,  
Promising immortal boon,  
Swift they set their feet, enthralled,  
To the dreaming dance of June

They passed into the forest's heart,  
Where the shadows thickened,  
Soul and trembling body thrilled  
With a joy new-quicken'd.  
It was as though from early days  
Their familiars  
Had been the words of worship of the lonely wood-  
land ways,  
And the articulate voices of the stars.

Keeping perfect measure  
To the music's chime,  
Reaping all the treasure  
Of the summer time,  
Noiselessly along the glades,  
Lithe white limbs all glancing,

Comely men and comely maids  
Drifted in their dancing

When chestnut-cones were in the lanes,  
Blushing, and eyed with ebony,  
And young oak apples lovingly  
Clung to their stems with rosy veins  
Threading their glossy amber—then  
They took them to faring, maids and men,  
Whose eyes were dull with toiling, far  
From their toil in the time of a perfect noon,  
To where the quiet shadows are,  
And joined the dreaming dance of June

•

## *Late Summer*

THOUGH summer long delayeth  
Her blue and golden boon,  
Yet now at length she stayeth  
Her wings above the noon ;  
She sets the waters dreaming  
To murmurous leafy tones,  
The weeded waters gleaming  
Above the stepping-stones.

Where fern and ivied willow  
Lean o'er the seaward brook,  
I read a volume mellow  
A poet's fairy-book ;  
The seaward brook is narrow, .  
The hazel spans its pride,  
And like a painted arrow  
The king-bird keeps the tide

## *The Broken Gate*

I know a little broken gate  
Beneath the apple-boughs and pines,  
The seasons lend it coloured state,  
And round its hinge the ivy twines—  
The ivy and the bloomless rose,  
And autumn berries flaming red ,  
The pine its gracious scent bestows,  
The apple-boughs their treasure shed

It opens on an orchard hung  
With heavy-laden boughs that spill  
Their brown and yellow fruit among  
The withered stems of daffodil  
The river from its shallows freed  
Here falls upon a stirless peace,  
The tides of time suspended lead  
The tired spirit to release

A little land of mellowed ease  
I find beyond my broken gate,

I hear amid the laden trees  
    A magic song, and there elate  
I pass along from sound and sight  
    Of men who fret the world away,  
I gather rich and rare delight  
    Where every day is holy day.

## *In the Woods*

I WAS in the woods to day,  
And the leaves were spinning there,  
Rich appavelled in decay,—  
In decay more wholly fair  
Than in life they ever were

Gold and rich barbaric red  
Freakt with pale and sapless vein,  
Spinning, spinning, spun and sped  
With a little sob of pain  
Back to harbouring earth again

Long in homely green they shone  
Through the summer rains and sun,  
Now their humbleness is gone,  
Now their little season run,  
Pomp and pageantry begun

Sweet was life and buoyant breath,  
Lovely too , but for a day  
Issues from the house of death  
Yet more beautiful array  
Hark, a whisper—" Come away "



One by one they spin and fall,  
But they fall in regal pride :  
Dying, do they hear a call  
Rising from an ebbless tide,  
And, hearing, are beatified ?

# *Travel Talk*

(TO E D E S)

LADYWOOD, 1912

To the high hills you took me, where desire,  
Daughter of difficult life, forgets her lures,  
And hope's eternal tasks no longer tire,  
And only peace endures  
Where anxious prayer becomes a worthless thing  
Subdued by muted praise,  
And asking nought of God and life we bring  
The conflict of long days  
Into a moment of immortal poise  
Among the scars and proud unbuilt spires,  
Where, seeking not the triumphs and the joys  
So treasured in the world, we kindle fires  
That shall not burn to ash, and are content  
To read anew the eternal argument

Nothing of man's intolerance we know  
Here, far from man, among the fortified hills,  
Nor of his querulous hopes  
To what may we attain? What matter, so

We feel the unwearied virtue that fulfils  
These cloudy crests and rifts and heathered slopes  
With life that is and seeks not to attain,  
For ever spends nor ever asks again ?

To the high hills you took me. And we saw  
The everlasting ritual of sky  
And earth and the waste places of the air,  
And momentarily the change of changeless law  
Was beautiful before us, and the cry  
Of the great winds was as a distant prayer  
From a massed people, and the choric sound  
Of many waters moaning down the long  
Veins of the hills was as an undersong ;  
And in that hour we moved on holy ground.

To the high hills you took me. Far below  
Lay pool and tarn locked up in shadowy sleep ;  
Above we watched the clouds unhasting go  
From hidden crest to crest ; the neighbour sheep  
Cropped at our side, and swift on darkling wings  
The hawks went sailing down the valley wind,  
The rock-bird chattered shrilly to its kind ;  
And all these common things were holy things.

From ghostly Skiddaw came the wind in flight  
By Langdale Pikes to Coniston's broad brow,  
From Coniston to proud Helvellyn's height,  
The eloquent wind, the wind that even now  
Whispers again its story gathered in  
For seasons of much traffic in the ways  
Where men so straitly spin  
The garment of unfathomable days

To the high hills you took me And we turned  
Our feet again towards the friendly vale,  
And passed the banks whereon the bracken burned  
And the last foxglove bells were spent and pale,  
Down to a hallowed spot of English land  
Where Rotha dreams its way from mere to mere,  
Where one with undistracted vision scanned  
Life's far horizons, he who sifted clear  
Dust from the grain of being, making song  
Memorial of simple men and minds  
Not bowed to cunning by deliberate wrong,  
And conversed with the spirit of the winds,  
And knew the guarded secrets that were sealed  
In pool and pine, petal and vagrant wing,  
Throning the shepherd folding from the field,  
Robing anew the daffodils of spring

We crossed the threshold of his home and stood  
Beside his cottage hearth where once was told  
The day's adventure drawn from fell and wood,  
And wisdom's words and love's were manifold,  
Where, in the twilight, gossip poets met  
To read again their peers of older time,  
And quiet eyes of gracious women set  
A bounty to the glamour of the rhyme

There is a wonder in a simple word  
That reinhabits fond and ghostly ways,  
And when within the poet's walls we heard  
One white with ninety years recall the days  
When he upon his mountain paths was seen,  
We answered her strange bidding and were made  
One with the reverend presence who had been  
Steward of kingly charges unbetrayed.

And to the little garden-close we went,  
Where he at eventide was wont to pass  
To watch the willing day's last sacrament,  
And the cool shadows thrown along the grass,  
To read again the legends of the flowers,  
Lighten with song th' obscure heroic plan,

To contemplate the process of the hours,  
And think on that old story which is man  
The lichened apple-boughs that once had spent  
Their blossoms at his feet, in twisted age  
Yet knew the wind, and the familiar scent  
Of heath and fern made sweet his hermitage  
And, moving so beneath his cottage-eave ,  
His song upon our lips, his life a star,  
A sign, a storied peace among the leaves,  
Was he not with us then ? He was not far

To the high hills you took me We had seen  
Much marvellous traffic in the cloudy ways,  
Had laughed with the white waters and the green,  
Had praised and heard the choric chant of praise,  
Communed anew with the undying dead,  
Resung old songs, retold old fabulous things,  
And, stripped of pride, had lost the world and led  
A world refashioned as unconquered kings

And the good day was done, and there again  
Where is your home of quietness we stood,  
Far from the sight and sound of travelling men,  
And watched the twilight climb from Ladywood

Above the pines, above the visible streams,  
Beyond the hidden sources of the rills,  
Bearing the season of uncharted dreams  
Into the silent fastness of the hills.

Peace on the hills, and in the valleys peace ;  
And Rotha's moaning music sounding clear ,  
The passing-song of wearied winds that cease,  
Moving among the reeds of Rydal Mere ;  
The distant gloom of boughs that still unscarred  
Beside their poet's grave due vigil keep  
With us were these, till night was throned and  
starred  
And bade us to the benison of sleep.

# *The Crowning of Dreaming John*

## I

*Seven days he travelled  
Down the roads of England,  
Out of leafy Warwick lanes  
Into London Town  
Grey and very wrinkled  
Was Dreaming John of Grafton,  
But seven days he walked to see  
A king put on his crown*

*Down the streets of London  
He asked the crowded people  
Where would be the crowning  
And when would it begin  
He said he'd got a shilling,  
A shining silver shilling,  
But when he came to Westminster  
They wouldn't let him in*

*Dreaming John of Grafton  
Looked upon the people,*



*Laughed a little laugh, and then  
Whistled and was gone.  
Out along the long roads,  
The twisting roads of England,  
Back into the Warwick lanes  
Wandered Dreaming John*

As twilight touched with her ghostly fingers  
 All the meadows and mellow hills,  
 And the great sun swept in his robes of glory—  
 Woven of petals of daffodils  
 And jewelled and fringed with leaves of the roses—  
 Down the plains of the western way,  
 Among the rows of the scented clover  
 Dreaming John in his dreaming lay

Since dawn had folded the stars of heaven  
 He'd counted a score of miles and five,  
 And now, with a vagabond heart untroubled  
 And proud as the properest man alive,  
 He sat him down with a limber spirit  
 That all men covet and few may keep,  
 And he watched the summer draw round her beauty  
 The shadow that shepherds the world to sleep

And up from the valleys and shining rivers,  
 And out of the shadowy wood-ways wild,  
 And down from the secret hills, and streaming  
 Out of the shimmering undefiled

Wonder of sky that arched him over,  
Came a company shod in gold  
And girt in gowns of a thousand blossoms,  
Laughing and rainbow-aureoled.

Wrinkled and grey and with eyes a-wonder  
And soul beatified, Dreaming John  
Watched the marvellous company gather  
While over the clover a glory shone ;  
They bore on their brows the hues of heaven,  
Their limbs were sweet with flowers of the fields,  
And their feet were bright with the gleaming  
treasure  
That prodigal earth to her children yields.

They stood before him, and John was laughing  
As they were laughing , he knew them all,  
Spirits of trees and pools and meadows,  
Mountain and windy waterfall,  
Spirits of clouds and skies and rivers,  
Leaves and shadows and rain and sun,  
A crowded, jostling, laughing army,  
And Dreaming John knew every one.

Among them then was a sound of ringing  
And chiming music, as one came down  
The level rows of the scented clover,  
Bearing aloft a flashing crown ,  
No word of a man's desert was spoken,  
Nor any word of a man's unworth,  
But there on the wrinkled brow it rested,  
And Dreaming John was king of the earth

*Dreaming John of Grafton  
Went away to London,  
Saw the coloured banners fly,  
Heard the great bells ring,  
But though his tongue was civil  
And he had a silver shilling,  
They wouldn't let him in to see  
The crowning of the King.*

*So back along the long roads,  
The leafy roads of England,  
Dreaming John went carolling,  
Travelling alone,  
And in a summer evening,  
Among the scented clover,  
He held before a shouting throng  
A crowning of his own.*

## *The Traveller*

WHEN March was master of furrow and fold,  
And the skies kept cloudy festival,  
And the daffodil pods were tipped with gold  
And a passion was in the plover's call,  
A spare old man went hobbling by  
With a broken pipe and a tapping stick,  
And he mumbled—" Blossom before I die,  
Be quick, you little brown buds, be quick

" I've weathered the world for a count of years—  
Good old years of shining fire—  
And death and the devil bring no fears,  
And I've fed the flame of my last desire ,  
I'm ready to go, but I'd pass the gate  
On the edge of the world with an old heart sick  
If I missed the blossoms I may not wait—  
The gate is open—be quick, be quick "

# *The Vagabond*

I know the pools where the grayling rise,  
I know the trees where the filberts fall,  
I know the woods where the red fox lies,  
The twisted elms where the brown owls call.  
And I've seldom a shilling to call my own,  
And there's never a girl I'd marry,  
I thank the Lord I'm a rolling stone  
With never a care to carry.

I talk to the stars as they come and go  
On every night from July to June,  
I'm free of the speech of the winds that blow,  
And I know what weather will sing what tune  
I sow no seed and I pay no rent,  
And I thank no man for his bounties,  
But I've a treasure that's never spent,  
I'm lord of a dozen counties.

## *The Feckenham Men*

THE jolly men at Feckenham  
Don't count their goods as common men,  
Their heads are full of silly dreams  
From half-past ten to half-past ten,  
They'll tell you why the stars are bright,  
And some sheep black and some sheep white

The jolly men at Feckenham  
Draw wages of the sun and rain,  
And count as good as golden coin  
The blossoms on the window pane,  
And Lord ! they love a sinewy tale  
Told over pots of foaming ale

Now here's a tale of Feckenham  
Told to me by a Feckenham man,  
Who, being only eighty years,  
Ran always when the red fox ran,  
And looked upon the earth with eyes  
As quiet as unclouded skies



These jolly men of Feckenham  
One day when summer strode in power  
Went down, it seems, among their lands  
And saw their bean fields all in flower  
“Wheat-ricks,” they said, “be good to see,  
What would a rick of blossoms be?”

So straight they brought the sickles out  
And worked all day till day was done,  
And builded them a good square rick  
Of scented bloom beneath the sun  
And was not this I tell to you  
A fiery-hearted thing to do?

## *Old Woman in May*

“OLD woman by the hedgerow  
In gown of withered black,  
With beads and pins and buttons  
And ribbons in your pack—  
How many miles do you go ?  
To Dumbleton and back ? ”

“To Dumbleton and back, sir,  
And round by Cotsall Hill,  
I count the miles at morning,  
At night I count them still,  
A Jill without a Jack, sir,  
I travel with a will ”

“It's little men are paying  
For such as you can do,  
You with the grey dust in your hair  
And sharp nails in your shoe,  
The young folks go a-Maying,  
But what is May to you ? ”

“I care not what they pay me  
While I can hear the call  
Of cattle on the hillside,  
And watch the blossoms fall  
In a churchyard where maybe  
There's company for all.”

## *In Lady Street*

ALL day long the traffic goes  
In Lady Street by dingy rows  
Of sloven houses, tattered shops—  
Fried fish, old clothes and fortune-tellers—  
Tall trams on silver-shining rails,  
With grinding wheels and swaying tops,  
And lorries with their corded bales,  
And screeching cars “Buy, buy!” the sellers  
Of rags and bones and sickening meat  
Cry all day long in Lady Street

And when the sunshine has its way  
In Lady Street, then all the grey  
Dull desolation grows in state  
More dull and grey and desolate,  
And the sun is a shamefast thing,  
A lord not comely-housed, a god  
Seeing what gods must blush to see,  
A song where it is ill to sing,  
And each gold ray despitiously  
Lies like a gold ironic rod

Yet one grey man in Lady Street  
Looks for the sun. He never bent  
Life to his will, his travelling feet  
Have scaled no cloudy continent,  
Nor has the sickle-hand been strong.  
He lives in Lady Street , a bed,  
Four cobwebbed walls.

But all day long  
A time is singing in his head  
Of youth in Gloucester lanes. He hears  
The wind among the barley-blades,  
The tapping of the woodpeckers  
On the smooth beeches, thistle-spades  
Slicing the sinewy roots , he sees  
The hooded filberts in the copse  
Beyond the loaded orchard trees,  
The netted avenues of hops ,  
He smells the honeysuckle thrown  
Along the hedge. He lives alone,  
Alone yet not alone, for sweet  
Are Gloucester lanes in Lady Street.

Aye, Gloucester lanes. For down below  
The cobwebbed room this grey man plies

A trade, a coloured trade    A show  
Of many coloured merchandise  
Is in his shop    Brown filberts there,  
And apples red with Gloucester air,  
And cauliflowers he keeps, and round  
Smooth marrows grown on Gloucester ground,  
Fat cabbages and yellow plums,  
And gaudy brave chrysanthemums,  
And times a glossy pheasant lies  
Among his store, not Tyrian dyes  
More rich than are the neck feathers,  
And times a prize of violets,  
Or dewy mushrooms satin skinned  
And times an unfamiliar wind  
Robbed of its woodland favour stirs  
Gay daffodils this grey man sets  
Among his treasure

   All day long  
In Lady Street the traffic goes  
By dingy houses, desolate rows  
Of shops that stare like hopeless eyes  
Day long the sellers cry their cries,  
The fortune tellers tell no wrong  
Of lives that know not any right,

And drift, that has not even the will  
To drift, toils through the day until  
The wage of sleep is won at night.  
But this grey man heeds not at all  
The hell of Lady Street. His stall  
Of many-coloured merchandise  
He makes a shining paradise,  
As all day long chrysanthemums  
He sells, and red and yellow plums  
And cauliflowers. In that one spot  
Of Lady Street the sun is not  
Ashamed to shine and send a rare  
Shower of colour through the air ,  
The grey man says the sun is sweet  
On Gloucester lanes in Lady Street.

## *An Epilogue*

Come tell us, you that travel far  
With brave or shabby merchandise,  
Have you saluted any star  
That goes uncourtiered in the skies ?

Do you remember leaf or wing  
Or brook the willows leant along,  
Or any small familiar thing  
That passed you as you went along ?

Or does the trade that is your lust  
Drive you as yoke-beasts driven apace,  
Making the world a road of dust  
From market-place to market-place ?

You traffic in the grain, the wine,  
In purple and in cloth of gold,  
In treasure of the field and mine,  
In fables of the poets told,—

But have you laughed the wine cups dry  
And on the loaves of plenty fed,



And walked, with all your banners high,  
In gold and purple garmented ?

And do you know the songs you sell  
And cry them out along the way ?  
And is the profit that you tell  
After your travel day by day

Sinew and sap of life, or husk  
Dead coffer-ware or kindled brain ?  
And do you gather in the dusk  
To make your heroes live again ?

If the grey dust is over all,  
And stars and leaves and wings forgot,  
And your blood holds no festival  
Go out from us , we need you not

But if you are immoderate men,  
Zealots of joy, the salt and sting  
And savour of life upon you then  
We call you to our counselling.

And we will hew the holy boughs  
    To make us level rows of oars,  
And we will set our shining prows  
    For strange and unadventured shores

Where the great tideways swiftest run  
    We will be stronger than the strong,  
And sack the cities of the sun,  
    And spend our booty in a song

## *The Carver in Stone*

HE was a man with wide and patient eyes,  
Grey, like the drift of twitch-fires blown in June,  
That, without fearing, searched if any wrong  
Might threaten from your heart. Grey eyes he had  
Under a brow was drawn because he knew  
So many seasons to so many pass  
Of upright service, loyal, unabased  
Before the world seducing, and so, barren  
Of good words praising and thought that mated his.  
He carved in stone. Out of his quiet life  
He watched as any faithful seaman charged  
With tidings of the myriad faring sea,  
And thoughts and premonitions through his mind  
Sailing as ships from strange and storied lands  
His hungry spirit held, till all they were  
Found living witness in the chiselled stone  
Slowly out of the dark confusion, spread  
By life's innumerable venturings  
Over his brain, he would triumph into the light  
Of one clear mood, unblemished of the blind  
Legions of errant thought that cried about  
His rapt seclusion . as a pearl unsoiled,



The owl, the dewlapped bull, the running pard,  
The camel and the lizard of the slime,  
The ram with quivering fleece and fluted horn,  
The crested eagle and the doming bat  
Were sacred. And the king and his high priests  
Decreed a temple, wide on columns huge,  
Should top the cornlands to the sky's far line  
They bade the carvers carve along the walls  
Images of their gods, each one to carve  
As he desired, his choice to name his god . . .  
And many came ; and he among them, glad  
Of three leagues' travel through the singing air  
Of dawn among the boughs yet bare of green,  
The eager flight of the spring leading his blood  
Into swift lofty channels of the air,  
Proud as an eagle riding to the sun . .  
An eagle, clean of pinion there's his choice

Daylong they worked under the growing roof,  
One at his leopard, one the staring ram,  
And he winning his eagle from the stone,  
Until each man had carved one image out,  
Arow beyond the portal of the house.  
They stood arow, the company of gods,  
Camel and bat, lizard and bull and ram,

The pard and owl, dead figures on the wall,  
Figures of habit driven on the stone  
By chisels governed by no heat of the brain  
But drudges of hands that moved by easy rule  
Proudly recorded mood was none, no thought  
Plucked from the dark battalions of the mind  
And throned in everlasting sight But one  
God of them all was witness of belief  
And large adventure dared His eagle spread  
Wide pinions on a cloudless ground of heaven,  
Glad with the heart's high courage of that dawn  
Moving upon the ploughlands newly sown,  
Dead stone the rest He looked, and knew it so

Then came the king with priests and counsellors  
And many chosen of the people, wise  
With words weary of custom, and eyes askew  
That watched their neighbour face for any news  
Of the best way of judgment, till, each sure  
None would determine with authority,  
All spoke in prudent praise One liked the owl  
Because an owl blinked on the beam of his barn  
One, hoarse with crying gospels in the street,  
Praised most the ram, because the common folk  
Wore breeches made of ram's wool One declared

The tiger pleased him best, the man who carved  
The tiger-god was halt out of the womb  
A man to praise, being so pitiful.  
And one, whose eyes dwelt in a distant void,  
With spell and omen pat upon his lips,  
And a purse for any crystal prophet ripe,  
A zealot of the mist, gazed at the bull  
A lean ill-shapen bull of meagre lines  
That scarce the steel had graved upon the stone  
Saying that here was very mystery  
And truth, did men but know. And one there was  
Who praised his eagle, but remembering  
The lither pinion of the swift, the curve  
That liked him better of the mirrored swan  
And they who carved the tiger-god and ram,  
The camel and the pard, the owl and bull,  
And lizard, listened greedily, and made  
Humble denial of their worthiness,  
And when the king his royal judgment gave  
That all had fashioned well, and bade that each  
Re-shape his chosen god along the walls  
Till all the temple boasted of their skill,  
They bowed themselves in token that as this  
Never had carvers been so fortunate.

Only the man with wide and patient eyes  
Made no denial, neither bowed his head  
Already while they spoke his thought had gone  
Far from his eagle, leaving it for a sign  
Loyally wrought of one deep breath of life,  
And played about the image of a toad  
That crawled among his ivy leaves    A queer  
Puff bellied toad, with eyes that always stared  
Sidelong at heaven and saw no heaven there,  
Weak-hammed, and with a throttle somehow twisted  
Beyond full wholesome draughts of air, and skin  
Of wrinkled lips, the only zest or will  
The little flashing tongue searching the leaves  
And king and priest, chosen and counsellor,  
Babbling out of their thin and jealous brains,  
Seemed strangely one, a queer enormous toad  
Panting under giant leaves of dark,  
Sunk in the loins, peering into the day  
Their judgment wry he counted not for wrong  
More than the fabled poison of the toad  
Striking at simple wits, how should their thought  
Or word in praise or blame come near the peace  
That shone in seasonable hours above  
The patience of his spirit's husbandry?  
They foolish and not seeing, how should he



Spend anger there or fear    great ceremonies  
Equal for none save great antagonists ?  
The grave indifference of his heart before them  
Was moved by laughter innocent of hate,  
Chastising clean of spite, that moulded them  
Into the antic likeness of his toad  
Bidding for laughter underneath the leaves

He bowed not, nor disputed, but he saw  
Those ill-created joyless gods, and loathed,  
And saw them creeping, creeping round the walls,  
Death breeding death, wile witnessing to wile,  
And sickened at the dull iniquity  
Should be rewarded, and for ever breathe  
Contagion on the folk gathered in prayer  
His truth should not be doomed to march among  
This falsehood to the ages    He was called,  
And he must labour there, if so the king  
Would grant it, where the pillars bore the roof  
A galleried way of meditation nursed  
Secluded time, with wall of ready stone  
In panels for the carver set between  
The windows    there his chisel should be set,  
It was his plea    And the king spoke of him,  
Scorning, as one lack-fettle, among all these



The temple's quiet ; and at fall of dusk  
Passing among the carvers homeward, they  
Would speak of him as mad, or weak against  
The challenge of the world, and let him go  
Lonely, as was his will, under the night  
Of stars or cloud or summer's folded sun,  
Through crop and wood and pastureland to sleep.  
None took the narrow stair as wondering  
How did his chisel prosper in the stone,  
Unvisited his labour and forgot.  
And times when he would lean out of his height  
And watch the gods growing along the walls,  
The row of carvers in their linen coats  
Took in his vision a virtue that alone  
Carving they had not nor the thing they carved.  
Knowing the health that flowed about his close  
Imagining, the daily quiet won  
From process of his clean and supple craft,  
Those carvers there, far on the floor below,  
Would haply be transfigured in his thought  
Into a gallant company of men  
Glad of the strict and loyal reckoning  
That proved in the just presence of the brain  
Each chisel-stroke. How surely would he prosper  
In pleasant talk at easy hours with men

So fashioned if it might be—and his eyes  
Would pass again to those dead gods that grew  
In spreading evil round the temple walls ,  
And, one dead pressure made, the carvers moved  
Along the wall to mould and mould again  
The self same god, their chisels on the stone  
Tapping in dull precision as before,  
And he would turn, back to his lonely truth

He carved apace    And first his people's gods,  
About the toad, out of their sterile time,  
Under his hand thrilled and were recreate  
The bull, the pard, the camel and the ram,  
Tiger and owl and bat—all were the signs,  
Visibly made body on the stone,  
Of sightless thought adventuring the host  
That is mere spirit , these the bloom achieved  
By secret labour in the flowing wood  
Of rain and air and wind and continent sun  
His tiger, lithe, immobile in the stone,  
A swift destruction for a moment leashed,  
Sprang crying from the jealous stealth of men  
Opposed in cunning watch, with engines hid  
Of torment and calamitous desire  
His leopard, swift on lean and paltry limbs,

Was fear in flight before accusing faith.  
His bull, with eyes that often in the dusk  
Would lift from the sweet meadow grass to watch  
Him homeward passing, bore on massy beam  
The burden of the patient of the earth.  
His camel bore the burden of the damned,  
Being gaunt, with eyes aslant along the nose  
He had a friend, who hammered bronze and iron  
And cupped the moonstone on a silver ring,  
One constant like himself, would come at night  
Or bid him as a guest, when they would make  
Their poets touch a starrier height, or search  
Together with unparsimonious mind  
The crowded harbours of mortality.  
And there were jests, wholesome as harvest ale,  
Of homely habit, bred of hearts that dared  
Judgment of laughter under the eternal eye  
This frolic wisdom was his carven owl.  
His ram was lordship on the lonely hills,  
Alert and fleet, content only to know  
The wind mightily pouring on his fleece,  
With yesterday and all unrisen suns  
Poorer than disinherited ghosts. His bat  
Was ancient envy made a mockery,  
Cowering below the newer eagle carved

Above the arches with wide pinion spread,  
His faith's dominion of that happy dawn

And so he wrought the gods upon the wall,  
Living and crying out of his desire,  
Out of his patient incorruptible thought,  
Wrought them in joy was wages to his faith  
And other than the gods he made   The stalks  
Of bluebells heavy with the news of spring,  
The vine loaded with plenty of the year,  
And swallows, merely tenderness of thought  
Bidding the stone to small and fragile flight ,  
Leaves, the thin relics of autumnal boughs,  
Or massed in June  
All from their native pressure bloomed and  
    sprang  
Under his shaping hand into a proud  
And governed image of the central man,—  
Their moulding, charts of all his travelling  
And all were deftly ordered, duly set  
Between the windows, underneath the sills,  
And roofward, as a motion rightly planned,  
Till on the wall, out of the sullen stone,  
A glory blazed, his vision manifest,  
His wonder captive   And he was content

And when the builders and the carvers knew  
Their labour done, and high the temple stood  
Over the cornlands, king and counsellor  
And priest and chosen of the people came  
Among a ceremonial multitude  
To dedication    And, below the thrones  
Where king and archpriest ruled above the throng,  
Highest among the ranked artificers  
The carvers stood    And when, the temple vowed  
To holy use, tribute and choral praise  
Given as was ordained, the king looked down  
Upon the gathered folk, and bade them see  
The comely gods fashioned about the walls,  
And keep in honour men whose precious skill  
Could so adorn the sessions of their worship,  
Gravely the carvers bowed them to the ground

Only the man with wide and patient eyes  
Stood not among them ; nor did any come  
To count his labour, where he watched alone  
Above the coloured throng.    He heard, and looked  
Again upon his work, and knew it good,  
Smiled on his toad, passed down the stair unseen,  
And sang across the teeming meadows home.

## *A Town Window*

BEYOND my window in the night  
Is but a drab inglorious street,  
Yet there the frost and clean starlight  
As over Warwick woods are sweet

Under the grey drift of the town  
The crocus works among the mould  
As eagerly as those that crown  
The Warwick spring in flame and gold

And when the tramway down the hill  
Across the cobbles moans and rings,  
There is about my window-sill  
The tumult of a thousand wings



## *The New Miracle*

OF old men wrought strange gods for mystery,  
    Implored miraculous tokens in the skies,  
And lips that most were strange in prophecy  
    Were most accounted wise.

The hearthstone's commerce between mate and  
    mate,  
    Barren of wonder, prospered in content,  
And still the hunger of their thought was great  
    For sweet astonishment

And so they built them altars of retreat  
    Where life's familiar use was overthrown,  
And left the shining world about their feet,  
    To travel worlds unknown.

We hunger still. But wonder has come down  
    From alien skies upon the midst of us ,  
The sparkling hedgerow and the clamorous town  
    Have grown miraculous.

And man from his far travelling returns  
To find yet stranger wisdom than he sought,  
Where in the habit of his threshold burns  
Unfathomable thought

## *Memory*

ONE told me in the stress of days  
Of ease that memory should bring,  
And so I feared my trodden ways  
For snares against my labouring.

Lest I should spend my brain amiss  
In wrath for bitterness gone by,  
Or amorous for some old kiss,  
I would not deal with memory.

Because one said "In memory  
Is half the health of your estate,"  
I smote the dead years under me,  
I smote, and cast them from my gate.

## *The Boundaries*

ALTHOUGH beyond the track of unseen stars  
Imagination strove in weariless might,  
Yet loomed at last inviolable bars  
That bound my farthest flight

And when some plain old carol in the street  
Quickened a shining angel in my brain,  
I knew that even his passionate wings should beat  
Upon those bars in vain

And then I asked if God omnipotent  
Himself was caught within the snare, or free,  
And would the bars at his command relent,—  
And none could answer me

## *Last Confessional*

For all ill words that I have spoken,  
For all clear moods that I have broken,  
For all despite and hasty breath,  
Forgive me, Love, forgive me, Death.

Death, master of the great assize,  
Love, falling now to memories,  
You two alone I need to prove,  
Forgive me, Death, forgive me, Love.

For every tenderness undone,  
For pride when holiness was none  
But only easy charity,  
O Death, be pardoner to me

For stubborn thought that would not make  
Measure of love's thought for love's sake,  
But kept a sullen difference,  
Take, Love, this laggard penitence

For cloudy words too vainly spent  
To prosper but in argument,

When truth stood lonely at the gate,  
On your compassion, Death, I wait

For all the beauty that escaped  
This foolish brain, unsung, unshaped,  
For wonder that was slow to move,  
Forgive me, Death, forgive me, Love

For love that kept a secret cruse,  
For life defeated of its dues,  
This latest word of all my breath—  
Forgive me, Love, forgive me, Death

## *For Corin To-day*

OLD shepherd in your wattle cote,  
I think a thousand years are done  
Since first you took your pipe of oat  
And piped against the risen sun,  
Until his burning lips of gold  
Sucked up the drifting scarves of dew  
And bade you count your flocks from fold  
And set your hurdle stakes anew.

And then as now at noon you'd take  
The shadow of delightful trees,  
And with good hands of labour break  
Your barley bread with dairy cheese,  
And with some lusty shepherd mate  
Would wind a simple argument,  
And bear at night beyond your gate  
A loaded wallet of content.

O Corin of the grizzled eye,  
A thousand years upon your down

You've seen the ploughing teams go by  
Above the bells of Avon's town,  
And while there's any wind to blow  
Through frozen February nights,  
About your lambing pens will go  
The glimmer of your lanthorn lights



## *Mad 'I'om 'I'atterman*

“ Old man, grey man, good man scavenger,  
Bearing is it eighty years upon your crumpled  
back ?

What is it you gather in the frosty weather,  
Is there any treasure here to carry in your sack ? ”

“ I’ve a million acres and a thousand head of cattle,  
And a foaming river where the silver salmon leap;  
But I’ve left fat valleys to dig in sullen alleys  
Just because a twisted star rode by me in my  
sleep.

“ I’ve a brain is dancing to an old forgotten music  
Heard when all the world was just a crazy flight  
of dreams,  
And don’t you know I scatter in the dirt along the  
gutter  
Seeds that little ladies nursed by Babylonian  
streams ?

“ Mad Tom Tatterman, that is how they call me  
Oh, they know so much, so much, all so neatly  
dressed ;

I've a tale to tell you—come and listen, will you?—  
One as ragged as the twigs that make a magpie's  
nest

“Ragged, oh, but very wise You and this and  
that man,  
All of you are making things that none of you  
would lack,  
And so your eyes grow dusty, and so your limbs  
grow rusty—  
But mad Tom Tatterman puts nothing in his  
sack

“Nothing in my sack, sirs, but the Sea of Galilee  
Was walked for mad Tom Tatterman, and when  
I go to sleep  
They'll know that I have driven through the acres  
of broad heaven  
Flocks are whiter than the flocks that all your  
shepherds keep”

## *Mamble*

I NEVER went to Mamble  
That lies above the Teme,  
So I wonder who's in Mamble,  
And whether people seem  
Who breed and brew along there  
As lazy as the name,  
And whether any song there  
Sets alehouse wits aflame.

The finger-post says Mamble,  
And that is all I know  
Of the narrow road to Mamble,  
And should I turn and go  
To that place of lazy token  
That lies above the Teme,  
There might be a Mamble broken  
That was lissom in a dream.

So leave the road to Mamble  
And take another road

To as good a place as Mamble  
Be it lazy as a toad ,  
Who travels Worcester county  
Takes any place that comes  
When April tosses bounty  
To the cherries and the plum<sup>e</sup>

## *Love's Challenge*

WHEN days are words, and all is done,  
And we together lie alone  
In our last city, and the sun  
Can no more serve us than a stone

If then the riches that are signed  
In shapes of perishable earth  
Should know denial, and the mind  
That counted them be nothing worth,

If love that orders patiently  
Upon the lover's brain the one  
True stature of the loved should be  
Less than the dust when all is done,

Should love be forfeit, but a sound  
Of days outlasted by a rhyme,  
Then would eternity be found  
Apostate in the court of time.

## *The Poet to His Mistress*

If I should take  
Less thought of gentleness  
For your dear sake  
Than for the poignant labours that possess  
My blood, then surely by so much were signed  
My shame and loss in the world's recording mind

If you should be  
Jealous of my desire,  
And, loving me,  
Rebuke my patient hopes from your sweet fire,  
Then would you take a lover to your bed  
Abased with the pale submission of the dead

# *Love's House*

## I

I KNOW not how these men or those may take  
Their first glad measure of love's character,  
Or whether one should let the summer make  
Love's festival, and one the falling year

I only know that in my prime of days  
When my young branches came to blossoming,  
You were the sign that loosed my lips in praise,  
You were the zeal that governed all my spring.

## II

In prudent counsel many gathered near,  
Forewarning us of deft and secret snares  
That are love's use We heard them as we hear  
The ticking of a clock upon the stairs.

The troops of reason, careful to persuade,  
Blackened love's name, but love was more than  
these,  
For we had wills to venture unafraid  
The trouble of unnavigable seas.

III

Their word was but a barren seed that lies  
 Undrawn of the sun's health and undesired,  
 Because the habit of their hearts was wise,  
 Because the wisdom of their tongues was tired

For in the smother of contentious pride,  
 And in the fear of each tumultuous mood,  
 Our love has kept serenely fortified  
 And unsurped one stedfast solitude

IV

Dark words, and hasty humours of the blood  
 Have come to us and made no longer stay  
 Than footprints of a bird upon the mud  
 That in an hour the tide will take away

But not March weather over ploughlands blown,  
 Nor cresses green upon their gravel bed,  
 Are beautiful with the clean rigour grown  
 Of quiet thought our love has piloted



## v

I sit before the hearths of many men,  
 When speech goes gladly, eager to withhold  
 No word at all, yet when I pass again  
 The last of words is captive and untold.

We talk together in love's house, and there  
 No thought but seeks what counsel you may give,  
 And every secret trouble from its lair  
 Comes to your hand, no longer fugitive.

## vi

I woo the world, with burning will to be  
 Delighted in all fortune it may find,  
 And still the strident dogs of jealousy  
 Go mocking down the tunnels of my mind.

Only for you my contemplation goes  
 Clean as a god's, undarkened of pretence,  
 Most happy when your garner overflows,  
 Achieving in your prosperous diligence.

VII

When from the dusty corners of my brain  
Comes limping some ungainly word or deed,  
I know not if my dearest friend's disdain  
Be durable or brief, spent husk or seed

But your rebuke and that poor fault of mine  
Go straitly outcast, and we close the door,  
And I, no promise asking and no sign,  
Stand blameless in love's presence as before

VIII

A beggar in the ditch, I stand and call  
My questions out upon the queer parade  
Of folk that hurry by, and one and all  
Go down the road with never answer made

I do not question love I am a lord  
High at love's table, and the vigilant king,  
Unquestioned, from the hubbub at the board  
Leans down to me and tells me everything

# *Of Greatham*

(TO THOSE WHO LIVE THERE)

SPENDTHRIFT of ease, importunate of will,  
Daily we bid at learning's mart, and speak  
In speech that is but vanity, for still  
We know not what we seek.

For peace, than knowledge more desirable  
Into your Sussex quietness I came,  
When summer's green and gold and azure fell  
Over the world in flame

And peace upon your pasture-lands I found,  
Where grazing flocks drift on continually,  
As little clouds that travel with no sound  
Across a windless sky.

Out of your oaks the birds call to their mates  
That brood among the pines, where hidden deep  
From curious eyes a world's adventure waits  
In columned choirs of sleep.

Under the calm ascension of the night  
We heard the mellow lapsing and return  
158

Of night-owls purring in their groundling flight  
Through lanes of darkling fern

Unbroken peace when all the stars were drawn  
Back to their lairs of light, and rinked along  
From shire to shire the downs out of the dawn  
Were risen in golden song

I sing of peace who have known the large unrest  
Of men bewildered in their travelling,  
And I have known the bridal earth unblest  
By the brigades of spring

I have known that loss And now the broken  
thought  
Of nations marketing in death I know,  
The very winds to threnodies are wrought  
That on your downlands blow

I sing of peace Was it but yesterday  
I came among your roses and your corn?  
Then momentarily amid this wrath I pray  
For yesterday reborn

## *The Defenders*

His wage of rest at nightfall still  
He takes, who sixty years has known  
Of ploughing over Cotsall hill  
And keeping trim the Cotsall stone

He meditates the dusk, and sees  
Folds of his wonted shepherdings  
And lands of stubble and tall trees  
Becoming insubstantial things.

And does he see on Cotsall hill  
Thrown even to the central shire  
The funnelled shapes forbidding still  
The stranger from his cottage fire ?

*On the Picture of a Private Soldier  
who had gained a Victoria Cross*

No daemon in that face , he stands  
Strangely as one of men that build,  
In multitudes, with servile hands,  
The temples that they have not willed

Yet once he smote the prison walls,  
And strode the hills of chance again,  
And scattered to their burials  
The prudent devils of his brain

The old monotonies may keep  
Anew the sessions of their power  
His heart shall carry down to sleep  
The spoils of an eternal hour

## *Eclipse*

A MAN is dead . . . another dead . . .

God! can you count the companies  
Of stars across dear heaven spread?  
They are numbered even as these.

Blind brain of the world! And is the day  
Moving about its Christmas bells?  
Poor spinning brain, and wellaway . . .  
Christ . . . Christ? But no man tells.

The thoughts of men are kings They keep  
The crown, the sepulchre, the song.  
The thoughts of men are kings. They sleep . . .  
The thrones are empty overlong.

So rebel death a million-fold  
Of lamentable service takes  
The prophesying heart is cold . . .  
Is cold . . . or breaks

What now were best ? Some little thing ?  
To trim the dock-weed, cleanse the floor,  
To die, to grieve on death, to bring  
The pitcher to the door ?

Dig deep the grave, hew down the tree,  
Shatter the millstones, break the plough  
And was there once a Calvary ?  
And thorns upon His brow ?



## *Nocturne*

O ROYAL night, under your stars that keep  
Their golden troops in charted motion set,  
The living legions are renewed in sleep  
For bloodier battle yet.

O royal death, under your boundless sky  
Where unrecorded constellations throng,  
Dispassionate those other legions lie,  
Invulnerably strong

## *The Ships of Grief*

On seas where every pilot fails  
A thousand thousand ships to day  
Ride with a moaning in their sails,  
Through winds grey and waters grey

They are the ships of grief They go  
As fleets are derelict and driven,  
Estranged from every port they know,  
Scarce asking fortitude of heaven

No, do not hail them Let them ride  
Lonely as they would lonely be  
There is an hour will prove the tide,  
There is a sun will strike the sea

## *The Poets to the Heroes*

LET us devise a music for to-day,  
Solemn and sweet, worthy of solemn things,  
For death now takes an unfrequented way.  
Careless of age, his black and terrible wings  
Fold upon youth, the full imaginings  
Of midmost life are but a little clay.

Let sorrow sing the sorry forfeiture  
Of life that sailed upon the central sky  
Full-orbed in glad dominion, and secure  
As life may be beneath mortality,  
Let sorrow sing: the bitter laurels lie  
On brows fore-darkened of death's signature.

Most heavy toll has death of all the rare  
Bright bounty of the summertide of men,  
The brain of spring is stricken unaware,  
The flowing boughs are hewn. Make music then  
Solemn and sweet, till death shall choose again  
The winter tree and the grey-dusted hair.

Solemn, with notes that are not of the time  
When plough nor scythe nor sickle is afield,  
But chanted as remembering a prime  
Cold in desert, the rusting of a shield  
Too soon put by, poor lips and vision sealed  
When all the world was yet to see and rhyme

Solemn, with sound of guns that make salute  
Over a million graves untimely kept,  
Solemn, with sound of tears that may dispute  
No more with grief so long a day unwept,  
Solemn, because the wiser angel slept,  
Solemn, because the golden choirs were mute

Yet sweet, for every nobleness is sweet,  
Building above all bleak and envious power  
Rigours and fames and chronicles to greet  
The equal stars And never fairer flower  
Of nobleness was sprung than in this hour  
When youth and death in tragic bridal meet

Sweet, for the sacrifice that now is made,  
Sweet, for the soul's victorious desire,

Sweet, for the hope whereof in price is paid  
This ranging fury of destroying fire,  
Sweet, for the wings that beat above the pyre  
Of happy men whose faith was unbetrayed.

The stars dispute not, and the primrose makes  
Its bower unbidden underneath the thorn,  
Nor profits it, when the black angel wakes,  
To rail on death with argument forlorn,  
Then surely to heroic song was born  
This hour of earth that time so surely breaks.

Into your lonely silences you go  
And death is your imperishable deed,  
We bring you honour, and you shall not know,  
We bring you music, and you shall not heed,  
Yet is our song not measured by your need,  
Being our sorrow's crown and overthrow.

## *They also Serve*

BRIDE birds among your leaves to day  
Watching from England green,  
Your mates have gone what sorrier way,  
And you, what have you seen ?—

Of all things known but this you know—  
Against the falling night  
The myriad mates for ever go,  
Upon some alien flight

Hushed upon frosty trees you wait  
That paragon of springs,  
When seaward shall the sound be great  
Of fond returning wings

## *From Generation to Generation*

LONG since the sorrows of the nightingales  
Came throbbing through the night to lattices  
Where women watched whose amours had made rich  
The days of soldiers now gone out in mail  
And carven plate, with battleaxe and bow,  
Faring and fallen, or happily to be  
Home on some twilight road, a lonely spear. . . .

Long since, that so these ladies and their loves,  
And casements looking on to battlefields  
Where still a loyal crest might wear a rose,  
Have perished, or grown fabulous, all song,  
Or mist of mummers, or a crazy tale  
For those book-learnèd fools who miss the  
world . .

There is a wood in Warwickshire to-day,  
Haunted and hushed with midnight nightingales  
O summer song. And there are fields of France,  
And fields, O love, by many an alien sea. . . .

## *Riddles, R F C \**

(1916)

HE was a boy of April beauty , one  
Who had not tried the world , who, while the sun  
Flamed yet upon the eastern sky, was done

Time would have brought him in her patient ways—  
So his young beauty spoke—to prosperous days,  
To fulness of authority and praise

He would not wait so long    A boy, he spent  
His boy's dear life for England    Be content  
No honour of age had been more excellent

\* Lieut Stewart G Ridley Royal Flying Corps sacrificed  
his life in the Egyptian desert in an attempt to save a comrade  
He was twenty years of age



# *For April 23rd*

(1616-1916)

ONE thing to-day  
For England let us pray  
That, when this bitterness of blood is spent,  
Out of the darkness of the discontent  
Perplexing man with man, poor pride with pride,  
Shall come to her, and loverly abide,  
Sure knowledge that these lamentable days  
Were given to death and the bewildered praise  
Of dear young limbs and eager eyes forestilled,  
That in her home, where Shakespeare's passion  
grew  
From song to song, should thrive the happy-willed  
Free life that Shakespeare drew.

## *To Edmund Gosse*

### I

SOMETIMES youth comes to age and asks a blessing,  
Or counsel, or a tale of old estate,  
Yet youth will still be curiously guessing  
The old man's thought when death is at his  
gate,  
For all their courteous words they are not one,  
This youth and age, but civil strangers still,  
Age with the best of all his seasons done,  
Youth with his face towards the upland hill  
Age looks for rest while youth runs far and wide,  
Age talks with death, which is youth's very fear,  
Age knows so many comrades who have died,  
Youth burns that one companion is so dear  
So, with good will, and in one house, may dwell  
These two, and talk, and all be yet to tell

### II

But there are men who, in the time of age,  
Sometimes remember all that age forgets  
The early hope, the hardly compassed wage,  
The change of corn, and snow, and violets,

They are glad of praise ; they know this mornin,  
brings

As true a song as any yesterday ;  
Their labour still is set to many things,  
They cry their questions out along the way.  
They give as who may gladly take again

Some gift at need , they move with gallan  
ease

Among all eager companies of men ,

And never signed of age are such as these.  
They speak with youth, and never speak amiss ,  
Of such are you , and what is youth but this ?

## *Birthright*

LORD RAMESES of Egypt sighed  
Because a summer evening passed  
And little Ariadne cried  
That summer fancy fell at last  
To dust , and young Verona died  
When beauty's hour was overcast

Theirs was the bitterness we know  
Because the clouds of hawthorn keep  
So short a state, and kisses go  
To tombs unfathomably deep,  
While Rameses and Romeo  
And little Ariadne sleep

# *Olton Pools*

(TO G. C. G.)

Now June walks on the waters,  
And the cuckoo's last enchantment  
Passes from Olton pools.

Now dawn comes to my window  
Breathing midsummer roses,  
And scythes are wet with dew.

Is it not strange for ever  
That, bowered in this wonder,  
Man keeps a jealous heart ? . . .

That June and the June waters,  
And birds and dawn-lit roses,  
Are gospels in the wind,

Fading upon the deserts,  
Poor pilgrim revelations ? . . .  
Hist . . . over Olton pools !

## *September*

WIND and the robin's note to day  
Have heard of autumn and betray  
    The green long reign of summer  
The rust is falling on the leaves,  
September stands beside the sheaves,  
    The new, the happy comer

Not sad my season of the red  
And russet orchards gaily spread  
    From Cholesbury to Cooming,  
Nor sad when twilit valley trees  
Are ships becalmed on misty seas,  
    And beetles go abooming

Now soon shall come the morning crowds  
Of starlings, soon the coloured clouds  
    From oak and ash and willow,  
And soon the thorn and briar shall be  
Rich in their crimson livery,  
    In scarlet and in yellow

Spring laughed and thrilled a million veins,  
And summer shone above her rains  
    To fill September's faring ;  
September talks as kings who know  
The world's way and superbly go  
    In robes of wisdom's wearing.

## *Sunrise on Rydal Water*

(TO E D E S)

COME down at dawn from windless hills  
Into the valley of the lake,  
Where yet a larger quiet fills  
The hour, and mist and water make  
With rocks and reeds and island boughs  
One silence and one element,  
Where wonder goes surely as once  
It went  
By Galilean prow

Moveless the water and the mist,  
Moveless the secret air above,  
Hushed, as upon some happy tryst  
The poised expectancy of love,  
What spirit is it that adores  
What mighty presence yet unseen ?  
What consummation works apace  
Between  
These rapt enchanted shores ?



Never did virgin beauty wake  
Devouter to the bridal feast  
Than moves this hour upon the lake  
In adoration to the east ;  
Here is the bride a god may know,  
The primal will, the young consent,  
Till surely upon the appointed mood  
Intent  
The god shall leap and, lo,

Over the lake's end strikes the sun,  
White, flameless fire , some purity  
Thrilling the mist, a splendour won  
Out of the world's heart. Let there be  
Thoughts, and atonements, and desires,  
Proud limbs, and undeliberate tongue,  
Where now we move with mortal oars  
Among  
Immortal dews and fires.

So the old mating goes apace,  
Wind with the sea, and blood with thought,  
180

Lover with lover , and the grace  
Of understanding comes unsought  
When stars into the twilight steer,  
Or thrushes build among the may,  
Or wonder moves between the hills,  
And day  
Comes up on Rydal mere

## *Wordsworth at Grasmere*

THESE hills and waters fostered you  
Abiding in your argument  
Until all comely wisdom drew  
About you, and the years were spent.

Now over hill and water stays  
A world more intimately wise,  
Built of your dedicated days,  
And seen in your beholding eyes.

So, marvellous and far, the mind,  
That slept among them when began  
Waters and hills, leaps up to find  
Its kingdom in the thought of man.

## *Written at Ludlow Castle*

(IN THE HALL WHERE COMUS WAS FIRST PERFORMED)

WHERE wall and sill and broken window-frame  
Are bright with flowers unroofed against the skies,  
And nothing but the nesting jackdaws' cries  
Breaks the hushed even, once imperial came  
The muse that moved transfiguring the name  
Of Puritan, and beautiful and wise  
The verses fell, forespeaking Paradise,  
And poetry set all this hall aflame

Now silence has come down upon the place  
Where life and song so wonderfully went,  
And the mole's afoot now where that passion rang,  
Yet Comus now first moves his laurelled pace,  
For song and life for ever are unspent,  
And they are more than ghosts who lived and sang

## *Holiness*

If all the carts were painted gay,  
And all the streets swept clean,  
And all the children came to play  
By hollyhocks, with green  
Grasses to grow between,

If all the houses looked as though  
Some heart were in their stones,  
If all the people that we know  
Were dressed in scarlet gowns,  
With feathers in their crowns,

I think this gaiety would make  
A spiritual land.  
I think that holiness would take  
This laughter by the hand,  
Till both should understand.

## *The City*

A SHINING city, one  
Happy in snow and sun,  
And singing in the rain  
A paradisa! strain  
Here is a dream to keep,  
O Builders, from your sleep

O foolish Builders, wake,  
Take your trowels, take  
The poet's dream, and build  
The city song has willed,  
That every stone may sing  
And all your roads may ring  
With happy wayfaring

## *Daffodils*

AGAIN, my man of Lady Street,  
Your daffodils have come, the sweet  
Bell daffodils that are aglow  
In Ryton woods now, where they go  
Who are my friends and make good rhymes.

They come, these very daffodils,  
From that same flight of Gloucester hills,  
Where Dymock dames and Dymock men  
Have cider kegs and flocks in pen,  
For I've been there a thousand times.

Your petals are enchanted still  
As when those tongues of Orphic skill  
Bestowed upon that Ryton earth  
A benediction for your birth,  
Sun-daffodils that now I greet.

Because, brave daffodils, you bring  
Colour and savour of a spring  
That Ryton blood is quick to tell,  
You should be borne, if all were well,  
In golden carts to Lady Street.

## *Anthony Crundle*

HERE LIES THE BODY OF  
ANTHONY CRUNDLE  
FARMER OF THIS PARISH,  
WHO DIED IN 1849 AT THE AGE OF 82  
HE DELIGHTED IN MUSIC '

R I P

AND OF  
SUSAN,  
FOR FIFTY THREE YEARS HIS WIFE  
WHO DIED IN 1860 AGED 86

ANTHONY CRUNDLE of Dorrington Wood  
Played on a piccolo Lord was he,  
For seventy years, of sheaves that stood  
Under the perry and cider tree ,  
*Anthony Crundle, R I P*

And because he prospered with sickle and scythe,  
With cattle afield and labouring ewe,  
Anthony was uncommonly blithe,  
And played of a night to himself and Sue ,  
*Anthony Crundle, eighty two*



'l'he earth to till, and a tune to play,  
And Susan for fifty years and three,  
And Dorrington Wood at the end of day . . .  
May providence do no worse by me ,  
*Anthony Crundle, R.I.P.*

## *Old Oliver*

OLD Oliver, my uncle, went  
With but a penny for his needs,  
Walking from Cotsall hill to Clent,  
His pocket full of poppy seeds

And every little lane along  
He scattered them for good man's will,  
And then he sang a happy song  
From Clent again to Cotsall hill

## *Derbyshire Song*

COME loving me to Darley Dale  
In spring time or sickle time,  
And we will make as proud a tale  
As lovers in the antique prime  
Of Harry or Elizabeth.

With kirtle green and nodding flowers  
To deck my hair and little waist,  
I'll be worth a lover's hours. . . .

Come, fellow, thrive, there is no haste  
But soon is worn away in death.

Soon shall the blood be tame, and soon  
Our bodies lie in Darley Dale,  
Unreckoning of jolly June,  
With tongues past telling any tale ,  
My man, come loving me to-day.

I have a wrist is smooth and brown,  
I have a shoulder smooth and white,  
I have my grace in any gown  
By sun or moon or candle-light. . . .  
Come Darley way, come Darley way.

## *Millers Dale*

BAREFOOT we went by Millers Dale  
When meadowsweet was golden gloom  
And happy love was in the vale  
Singing upon the summer bloom  
Of gipsy crop and branches laid  
Of willows over chanting pools,  
Barefoot by Millers Dale we made  
Our summer festival of fools

Folly bright-eyed, and quick, and young  
Was there with all his silly plots,  
And trotty wagtail stepped among  
The delicate forget-me nots,  
And laughter played with us above  
The rocky shelves and weeded holes,  
And we had fellowship to love  
The pigeons and the water-voles

Time soon shall be when we are all  
Stillier than ever runs the Wye,

And every bitterness shall fall  
    To-morrow in obscurity,  
And wars be done, and treasons fail,  
    Yet shall new friends go down to greet  
The singing rocks of Millers Dale,  
    And willow pools and meadowsweet.

## *To the Lovers that come after us*

LOVERS, a little of this your happy time

Give to the thought of us who were as you,  
That we, whose dearest passion in your prime

Is but a winter garment, may renew  
Our love in yours, our flesh in your desire,

Our tenderness in your discovering kiss,  
For we are half the fuel of your fire,

As ours was fed by Marc and Beatrice  
Remember us, and, when you too are dead,

Our prayer with yours shall fall upon love's spring  
That all our ghostly loves be comforted

In those yet later lovers' love making ,  
So shall oblivion bring his dust to spill  
On brain and limbs, and we be lovers still

## *Love in October*

THE fields, the clouds, the farms and farming gear  
The drifting kine, the scarlet apple-trees . . .  
Not of the sun but separate are these,  
And individual joys, and very dear ,  
Yet when the sun is folded, they are here  
No more, the drifting skies : the argosies  
Of wagoned apples : still societies  
Of elms . red cattle on the stubbled year.

So are you not love's whole estate. I owe  
In many hearts more dues than I shall pay ,  
Yet is your heart the spring of all love's light,  
And should your love weary of me and go  
With all its thriving beams out of my day,  
These many loves would founder in that night.

## *Defiance*

O WIDE the way your beauty goes,  
For all its feigned indifference,  
And every folly's path it knows,  
And every humour of pretence

But I can be as false as are  
The rainbow loves which are your days,  
And I will gladly go, and far,  
Content with your immediate praise

Your lips, the shyer lover's bane,  
I take with disputation none,  
And am your kinsman in disdain  
When all is excellently done



## *A Christmas Night*

CHRIST for a dream was given from the dead  
To walk one Christmas night on earth again,  
Among the snow, among the Christmas bells.  
He heard the hymns that are his praise . *Noel*  
*And Christ is Born, and Babe of Bethlehem*  
He saw the travelling crowds happy for home,  
The gathering and the welcome, and the set  
Feast and the gifts, because he once was born,  
Because he, once was steward of a word.  
And so he thought, " The spirit has been kind  
So well the peoples might have fallen from me,  
My way of life being difficult and spare.  
It is beautiful that a dream in Galilee  
Should prosper so. They crucified me once,  
And now my name is spoken through the world  
And bells are rung for me and candles burnt.  
They might have crucified my dream who use  
My body ill ; they might have spat on me  
Always as in one hour on Golgotha." . .  
And the snow fell, and the last bell was still,  
And the poor Christ again was with the dead

## *Invocation*

As pools beneath stone arches take  
Darkly within their deeps again  
Shapes of the flowing stone, and make  
Stories anew of passing men,

So let the living thoughts that keep,  
Morning and evening, in their kind,  
Eternal change in height and deep,  
Be mirrored in my happy mind

Beat, world, upon this heart, be loud  
Your marvel chanted in my blood,  
Come forth, O sun, through cloud on cloud  
To shine upon my stubborn mood

Great hills that fold above the sea,  
Ecstatic airs and sparkling skies,  
Sing out your words to master me,  
Make me immoderately wise

# *Immortality*

## I

WHEN other beauty governs other lips,  
And snowdrops come to strange and happy  
springs,  
When seas renewed bear yet unbuilt ships,  
And alien hearts know all familiar things,  
When frosty nights bring comrades to enjoy  
Sweet hours at hearths where we no longer sit,  
When Liverpool is one with dusty Troy,  
And London famed as Attica for wit . . .  
How shall it be with you, and you, and you,  
How with us all who have gone greatly here  
In friendship, making some delight, some true  
Song in the dark, some story against fear ?  
Shall song still walk with love, and life be brave,  
And we, who were all these, be but the grave ?

No, lovers yet shall tell the nightingale  
 Sometimes a song that we of old time made,  
 And gossips gathered at the twilight ale  
 Shall say, "Those two were friends," or, "Un-  
 afraid  
 Of bitter thought were those because they loved  
 Better than most " And sometimes shall be told  
 How one, who died in his young beauty, moved,  
 As Astrophel, those English hearts of old  
 And the new seas shall take the new ships home  
 Telling how yet the Dymock orchards stand,  
 And you shall walk with Julius at Rome,  
 And Paul shall be my fellow in the Strand,  
 There in the midst of all those words shall be  
 Our names, our ghosts, our immortality

## *The Craftsmen*

CONFEDERATE hand and eye  
Work to the chisel's blade,  
Setting the grain aglow  
Of porch and sturdy beam  
So the strange gods may ply  
Strict arms till we are made  
Quick as the gods who know  
What builds behind this dream.

## *Petition*

O LORD, I pray that for each happiness  
My housemate brings I may give back no less  
Than all my fertile will ,

That I may take from friends but as the stream  
Creates again the hawthorn bloom adream  
Above the river sill ,

That I may see the spurge upon the wall  
And hear the nesting birds give call to call,  
Keeping my wonder new ,

That I may have a body fit to mate  
With the green fields, and stars, and streams in  
spate,  
And clean as clover dew ,

That I may have the courage to confute  
All fools with silence when they will dispute,  
All fools who will deride ,

That I may know all strict and sinewy art  
As that in man which is the counterpart,  
    Lord, of Thy fiercest pride ;

That somehow this beloved earth may wear  
A later grace for all the love I bear,  
    For some song that I sing ;

That, when I die, this word may stand for me  
He had a heart to praise, an eye to see,  
    And beauty was his king.

## *A Man's Daughter*

THERE IS an old woman who looks each night  
    Out of the wood  
She has one tooth, that isn't too white  
    She isn't too good

She came from the north looking for me,  
    About my jewel  
Her son, she says, is tall as can be ,  
    But, men say, cruel

My girl went northward, holiday making,  
    And a queer man spoke  
At the woodside once when night was breaking,  
    And her heart broke

For ever since she has pined and pined,  
    A sorry maid ,  
Her fingers are slack as the wool they wind,  
    Or her girdle braid



So now shall I send her north to wed,  
    Who here may know  
Only the little house of the dead  
    To ease her woe ?

Or keep her for fear of that old woman,  
    As a bird quick-eyed,  
And her tall son who is hardly human,  
    At the woodside ?

She is my babe and my daughter dear,  
    How well, how well  
Her grief to me is a fourfold fear,  
    Tongue cannot tell.

And yet I know that far in that wood  
    Are crumbling bones,  
And a mumble mumble of nothing that's good,  
    In heathen tones.

And I know that frail ghosts flutter and sigh  
    In brambles there,  
And never a bird or beast to cry  
    Beware, beware,

While threading the silent thickets go  
    Mother and son,  
Where scrupulous berries never grow,  
    And airs are none

And her deep eyes peer at eventide  
    Out of the wood,  
And her tall son waits by the dark woodside  
    For maidenhood

And the little eyes peer, and peer, and peer ,  
    And a word is said  
And some house knows, for many a year,  
    But years of dread

## *Venus in Arden*

Now Love, her mantle thrown,  
Goes naked by,  
Threading the woods alone,  
Her royal eye  
Happy because the primroses again  
Break on the winter continence of men.

I saw her pass to-day  
In Warwickshire,  
With the old imperial way,  
The old desire,  
Fresh as among those other flowers they went  
More beautiful for Adon's discontent

Those other years she made  
Her festival  
When the blue eggs were laid  
And lambs were tall,  
By the Athenian rivers while the reeds  
Made love melodious for the Ganymedes.

And now through Cantlow brakes,  
    By Wilmcote hill,  
To Avon side, she makes  
    Her garlands still,  
And I who watch her flashing limbs am one  
With youth whose days three thousand years  
    are done

## *May Garden*

A SHOWER of green gems on my apple-tree  
This first morning of May  
Has fallen out of the night, to be  
Herald of holiday  
Bright gems of green that, fallen there,  
Seem fixed and glowing on the air

Until a flutter of blackbird wings  
Shakes and makes the boughs alive,  
And the gems are now no frozen things,  
But apple-green buds to thrive  
On sap of my May garden, how well  
The green September globes will tell

Also my pear-tree has its buds,  
But they are silver yellow,  
Like autumn meadows when the floods  
Are silver under willow,  
And here shall long and shapely pears  
Be gathered while the autumn wears

And there are sixty daffodils  
    Beneath my wall  
And jealousy it is that kills  
    This world when all  
The spring's behaviour here is spent  
To make the world magnificent

## *Reciprocity*

I do not think that skies and meadows are  
Moral, or that the fixture of a star  
Comes of a quiet spirit, or that trees  
Have wisdom in their windless silences.  
Yet these are things invested in my mood  
With constancy, and peace, and fortitude,  
That in my troubled season I can cry  
Upon the wide composure of the sky,  
And envy fields, and wish that I might be  
As little daunted as a star or tree.

## *The Lechers*

I SAW three lechers walking by  
With bodies all forlorn,  
Who had betrayed the symmetry  
Of love, and made a scorn  
Of limbs grown to a lyric fire  
Through generations of desire

I heard three Statesmen buy and sell  
The souls that are a State,  
Nor might one word of truth rebel  
Where cunning had for mate  
Shallow necessity and blind ,       ↵  
And these were lechers of the mind

I would not have for comrades those  
Poor lechers of the street,  
Yet they were fitter housefellows  
Than these who soil the sweet  
Honour of thought, and bring the brain  
To dark and brutish sloth again



## *Dreams*

WE have our dreams ; not happiness.  
Great cities are upon the hill  
To lighten all our dream, and still  
We have no cities to possess  
But cities built of bitterness.

We see gay fellows top to toe,  
And girls in rainbow beauty bright  
'Tis but of silly dreams I write,  
For up and down the streets we know,  
The scavengers and harlots go.

Give me a dozen men whose theme  
Is honesty, and we will set  
On high the banner of dreams . . . and yet  
Thousands will pass us in a stream,  
Nor care a penny what we dream.

## *The Hours*

THOSE hours are best when suddenly  
The voices of the world are still,  
And in that quiet place is heard  
The voice of one small singing bird,  
Alone within his quiet tree ,

When to one field that crowns a hill,  
With but the sky for neighbourhood,  
The crowding counties of my brain  
Give all their riches, lake and plain,  
Cornland and fell and pillared wood ,  
When in a hill-top acre, bare  
For the seed's use, I am aware  
Of all the beauty that an age  
Of earth has taught my eyes to see ,

When Pride and Generosity  
The Constant Heart and Evil Rage,  
Affection and Desire, and all  
The passions of experience  
Are no more tabled in my mind,  
Learning's idolatry, but find

Particularity of sense  
In daily fortitudes that fall  
From this or that companion,  
Or in an angry gossip's word ,

When one man speaks for Every One,  
When Music lives in one small bird,  
When in a furrowed hill we see  
All beauty in epitome  
Those hours are best , for those belong  
To the lucidity of song.

## *Foundations*

THOSE lovers old had rare conceits  
To make persuasion beautiful,  
Or rail upon the pretty fool  
Who would not share those wanton sweets  
That, guarded, soon are bitterness

But we, my love, can look on these  
Old tournaments of wit, and say  
What novices of love were they,  
Who loved by seasons and degrees,  
And in the rate of more and less

We will not make of love a stale  
For deft and nimble argument,  
Nor shall denial and consent  
Be processes whereof shall fail  
One surety that we possess

# *Day*

DAWN is up at my window, and in the may-tree  
The finches gossip, and tits, and beautiful sparrows  
With feathers bright and brown as September  
hazels.

The sunlight is here, filtered through rosy curtains,  
Docile and disembodied, a ghost of sunlight,  
A gentle light to greet the dreamer returning.

Part the curtains. I give you salutation  
Day, clear day, let us be friendly fellows.  
Come. . . . I hear the Liars about the city.

## *Politics*

You say a thousand things,  
Persuasively,  
And with strange passion hotly I agree,  
And praise your zest,  
And then  
A blackbird sings  
On April lilac, or fieldfaring men,  
Ghostlike, with loaded wain,  
Come down the twilight lane  
To rest,  
And what is all your argument to me ?

Oh yes—I know, I know,  
It must be so—  
You must devise  
Your myriad policies,  
For we are little wise,  
And must be led and marshalled, lest we keep  
Too fast a sleep  
Far from the central world's realities  
Yes, we must heed—

For surely you reveal  
Life's very heart ; surely with flaming zeal  
You search our folly and our secret need ,  
And surely it is wrong  
To count my blackbird's song,  
My cones of lilac, and my wagon team,  
More than a world of dream.

But still  
A voice calls from the hill  
I must away  
I cannot hear your argument to-day.

## *Birmingham—1916*

ONCE Athens worked and went to see the play,  
And Thomas Atkins kissed the girls of Rome,  
In council in Victoria Square to day  
Are grey-beard Nazarenes, with shop and home  
And counting house and all the friendly cares  
That Joseph knew , in Bull Ring markets meet  
Gossips as once at Babylonian fairs,  
And Helen walks in Corporation Street

Now Troy is Homer , and of Nazareth  
Grave histories are of one love that was strong ,  
Athens is beauty , Rome an immortal death ,  
And Babylon immortal in a song  
Perplexed as ours these cities were of old ,  
And shall our name greatly as these be told ?



## *With Daffodils*

I SEND you daffodils, my dear,  
For these are emperors of spring,  
And in my heart you keep so clear  
So delicate an empery,  
That none but emperors could be  
Ambassadors endowed to bring  
My messages of honesty.

My mind makes faring to and fro,  
Deft or bewildered, dark or kind,  
That not the eye of God may know  
Which motion is of true estate  
And which a twisted runagate  
Of all the farings of my mind,  
And which has honesty for mate.

Only my love for you is clean  
Of scandal's use, and though, may be,  
Far rangers have my passions been,  
Since thus the word of Eden went,  
Yet of the springs of my content,  
My very wells of honesty  
Are you the only firmament.

## *For a Guest Room*

ALL words are said,  
And may it fall  
That, crowning these,  
You here shall find  
A friendly bed,  
A sheltering wall,  
Your body's ease,  
A quiet mind

May you forget  
In happy sleep  
The world that still  
You hold as friend,  
And may it yet  
Be ours to keep  
Your friendly will  
To the world's end

For he is blest  
Who, fixed to shun

All evil, when  
The worst is known,  
Counts, east and west,  
When life is done,  
His debts to men  
In love alone.

g

## *On Reading the MS of Dorothy Wordsworth's Journals*

TO-DAY I read the poet's sister's book, —  
She who so comforted those Grasmere days  
When song was at the flood, and thence I took  
A larger note of fortitude and praise

And in her ancient fastness beauty stirred,  
And happy faith was in my heart again,  
Because the virtue of a simple word  
Was durable above the lives of men

For reading there that quiet record made  
Of skies and hills, domestic hours, and free  
Traffic of friends, and song, and duty paid,  
I touched the wings of immortality

## *The Old Warrior*

SORROW has come to me,  
Making the world to be  
Of sunken cheek ,  
Faded my fields, and of  
Names that were most to love,  
I dare not speak.

Would that my soul were blind,  
Since beauty brings to mind  
All that is done,  
Saying, " How gladly you  
Walked with your chosen few  
Under my sun "

I am an alien now ;  
Tell me, good stranger, how  
Best may be borne  
His grief who comes at night  
To his own window-light  
Friendless, forlorn.

No I will pass Again  
Of my delight in men  
Nothing shall tell  
Now is my travel where  
My lost companions fare,  
Onward Farewell

## *The Guest*

SOMETIMES I feel that death is very near,  
And, with half-lifted hand,  
Looks in my eyes, and tells me not to fear,  
But walk his friendly land,  
Comrade with him, and wise  
As peace is wise.

Then, greatly though my heart with pity moves  
For dear imperilled loves,  
I somehow know  
That death is friendly so,  
A comfortable spirit ; one who takes  
Long thought for all our sakes.

I wonder ; will he come that friendly way,  
That guest, or roughly in the appointed day ?  
And will, when the last drops of life are spilt,  
My soul be torn from me,  
Or, like a ship truly and trimly built,  
Slip quietly to sea ?

## *Index of First Lines*





# *Index of First Lines*

## *Of the Poems contained in Volume I*

AGE

A little time they lived again, and lo !	43
A man is dead        another dead	162
A shining city, one	185
A shower of green gems on my apple tree	208
Again, my man of Lady Street	186
All day long the traffic goes	119
All words are said	221
Although beyond the track of unseen stars	143
And herein lies great solace    Who shall say	37
Anthony Crundle of Dorrington Wood	187
As pools beneath stone arches take	197
As twilight touched with her ghostly fingers	109
Austere and clad in sombre robes of grey	86
Barefoot we went by Millers Dale	191
Beyond my window in the night	139
Bride birds among your leaves to day	169
Christ for a dream was given from the dead	196
Come down at dawn from windless hills	179
Come, let us tell it over	48
Come loving me to Darley Dale	190
Come sweetheart listen, for I have a thing	77
Come tell us you that travel far	123

	PAGE
Confederate hand and eye . . .	200
Dawn is up at my window, and in the may-tree .	216
Dreaming John of Grafton . . .	112
For all ill words that I have spoken . . .	144
God laughed when he made Grafton .	83
God of the cherry-bloom in the orchards of calm .	70
He was a boy of April beauty , one . . .	171
He was a man with wide and patient eyes . . .	126
His wage of rest at nightfall still . . .	160
I caught the changes of the year .	71
I do not think that skies and meadows are	210
I heard my love go laughing . . .	59
I know a little broken gate .	97
I know not how these men or those may take .	154
I know the night is heavy with her stars . .	12
I know the pools where the grayling rise .	114
I married him on Christmas morn . . .	51
I never went to Mamble . . .	150
I saw history in a poet's song . . .	1
I saw three lechers walking by . . .	211
I send you daffodils, my dear . . .	220

	PAGE
I was in the woods to day	99
I watch the good ships on the sea	10
I went beneath the sunny sky	79
If all the carts were painted gay	184
If ever you with riches should be bought	67
If I had never seen	63
If I should take	153
Let us devise a music for to day	166
Long since the sorrows of the nightingales	170
Lord, not for light in darkness do we pray	7
Lord of the host of deep desires	65
Lord Rameses of Egypt sighed	175
Lovers, a little of this your happy time	193
No daemon in that face he stands	161
No lovers yet shall tell the nightingale	199
Not of the high heroic line was he	38
Not wise as cunning scholars are	76
Now June walks on the waters	176
Now Love, her mantle thrown	206
O Lord I pray that for each happiness	201
O royal night under your stars that keep	164
O wide the way your beauty goes	195
Of old men wrought strange gods for mystery	140

	PAGE
Old man, grey man, good man scavenger . . .	148
Old Oliver, my uncle, went . . .	189
Old shepherd in your wattle cote . . .	146
Old woman by the hedgerow . . .	117
On seas where every pilot fails	165
Once Athens worked and went to see the play	219
One thing to-day	172
One told me in the stress of days . . .	142
Our love forsworn . . . .	66
 Pierrot alone . . .	 61
Proud insolent June with burning lips . . .	73
 Seven days he travelled . . .	 107
She drew the patterned curtains back	53
Sometimes I feel that death is very near	226
Sometimes youth comes to age and asks a blessing	173
Sorrow has come to me . . .	224
Spendthrift of ease, importunate of will . . .	158
 Thank God for sleep in the long quiet night . . .	 87
That I, some nameless æons hence . . .	5
The barriers of sleep are crossed . . .	50
The chestnut cones were in the lanes . . .	89
The cloudy peril of the seas . . .	58
The doves call down the long arcades of pine . . .	2

	PAGE
The fields, the clouds, the farms and farming gear	194
The jolly men at Feckenham	115
The large report of fame I lack	19
The loaded sheaves are harvested	74
The spring is passing through the land	72
The word is said, and I no more shall know	18
The year is lapsing into time	75
There are no oaks in all the shires	81
There is an old woman who looks each night	203
These hills and waters fostered you	182
They who are sceptred of the poets' race	36
Those hours are best when suddenly	213
Those lovers old had rare conceits	215
Though summer long delayeth	96
Time gathers to my name	21
To the high hills you took me, where desire	101
To you good ease, and grace to love us well	39
To day I read the poet's sister's book	223
Two candles oaken set upon blue folds	85
We come from the laurels and daffodils	47
We have our dreams, not happiness	212
We moved along the gravelled way	45
When days are words, and all is done	152
When March was master of furrow and fold	113
When other beauty governs other lips	198
Whence these hods, and bricks of bright red clay	14

	PAGE
Where wall and sill and broken window-frame	183
Wind and the robin's note to-day . . .	177
 You fools behind the panes who peer . ' .	35
You may not wear immortal leaves .	69
You say a thousand things . . .	217
You were three men and women two .	11







